

P. CRAIG RUSSELL • KENT WILLIAMS • AL WILLIAMSON

THE **RAY**
BRADBURY
CHRONICLES

I



The Authorized Adaptations

THE RAY BRADBURY CHRONICLES
THE AUTHORIZED ADAPTATIONS

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THE RAY
BRADBURY
CHRONICLES

VOLUME ONE

A BYRON PREISS BOOK



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INTRODUCTION

THIS IS THE easiest introduction I have ever written.

For comic strips, comic books and the creators of comics have filled my life since I was nine years old and BUCK ROGERS exploded before my eyes in the WAUKEGAN NEWS SUN. I knew then that I was staring at something that would change my life forever. That one strip, on an October afternoon in 1929, seized me into the future and would not let me return. I learned my

first lesson in aesthetics that autumn. I collected BUCK ROGERS for three months and then when kids in school made fun of me for believing in the future, I tore them up. A week later, I burst into tears. Why am I crying? I asked myself. Who died?

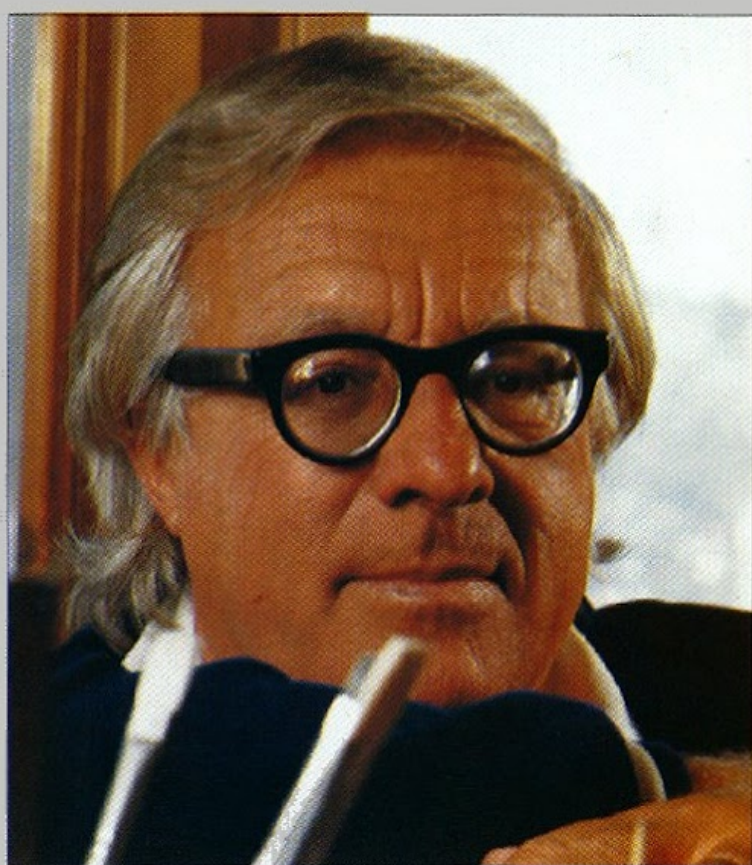
The answer was: me.

I had listened to those fools who didn't believe that one day we would arrive on the Moon or visit Mars. I made my most important decision then. I

went back to collecting BUCK ROGERS. In all the years since I have not once listened to any so-called friend who made fun of my hobby, my dream, my lifeblood.

When I was 50 years old I got a telephone call from Robert Dille, John Dille's son. John Dille, you recall, created - BUCK ROGERS way back in 1929. And here was his son asking, "Would you like to write an Introduction for the collected works of BUCK ROGERS?"

Would I! My God. The nine-year-old hidden away in my heart, leaped with joy. You see!? I shouted back down through the



years at those idiots who had tried to advise me wrongly. What do you say to that?

From BUCK ROGERS I moved to collecting the huge Sunday color pages of BUCK and TARZAN and, a few years later, FLASH GORDON. I collected PRINCE VALIANT for more than 30 years and wrote love letters to Harold Foster, its creator, nam-

ing him as the top comics illustrator of my entire life. For a reward, Foster sent me two giant full-page Sunday PRINCE VALIANT originals, which I will let go of only on my last day on Earth.

I still have everything from 1929 on. All the strips, panels, books, collections and super-collections. MICKEY MOUSE. MAJOR HOOPLE. POPEYE. OUT OUR WAY. BRICK BRADFORD. You name 'em, I got 'em.

And I still read ANDY CAPP, THE FAR SIDE, B.C., and THE WIZARD OF ID every day.

By now you will have perceived my ancient hyper-ventilation, which now applies to this collection. At long last, I will be collecting--myself! Nothing could be finer.

For I still believe that there's nothing wrong with comics that a good idea and a good presentation can't cure, providing books whereby you yank kids through excitement, into reading books, by gosh, real live books. But you must start somewhere, mustn't you?

And my start was BUCK ROGERS. I never stopped flying or reading after that. He gave me a great life. Now, I hope this book, and the adapters and artists in it, will lend new life, outsized, to you.

Not CALVIN AND HOBBS and not TAILSPIN TOMMY or LITTLE NEMO, perhaps.

A half-shadow perhaps. But my own.

Ron Bradbury
Los Angeles

DARK THEY WERE AND GOLDEN EYED

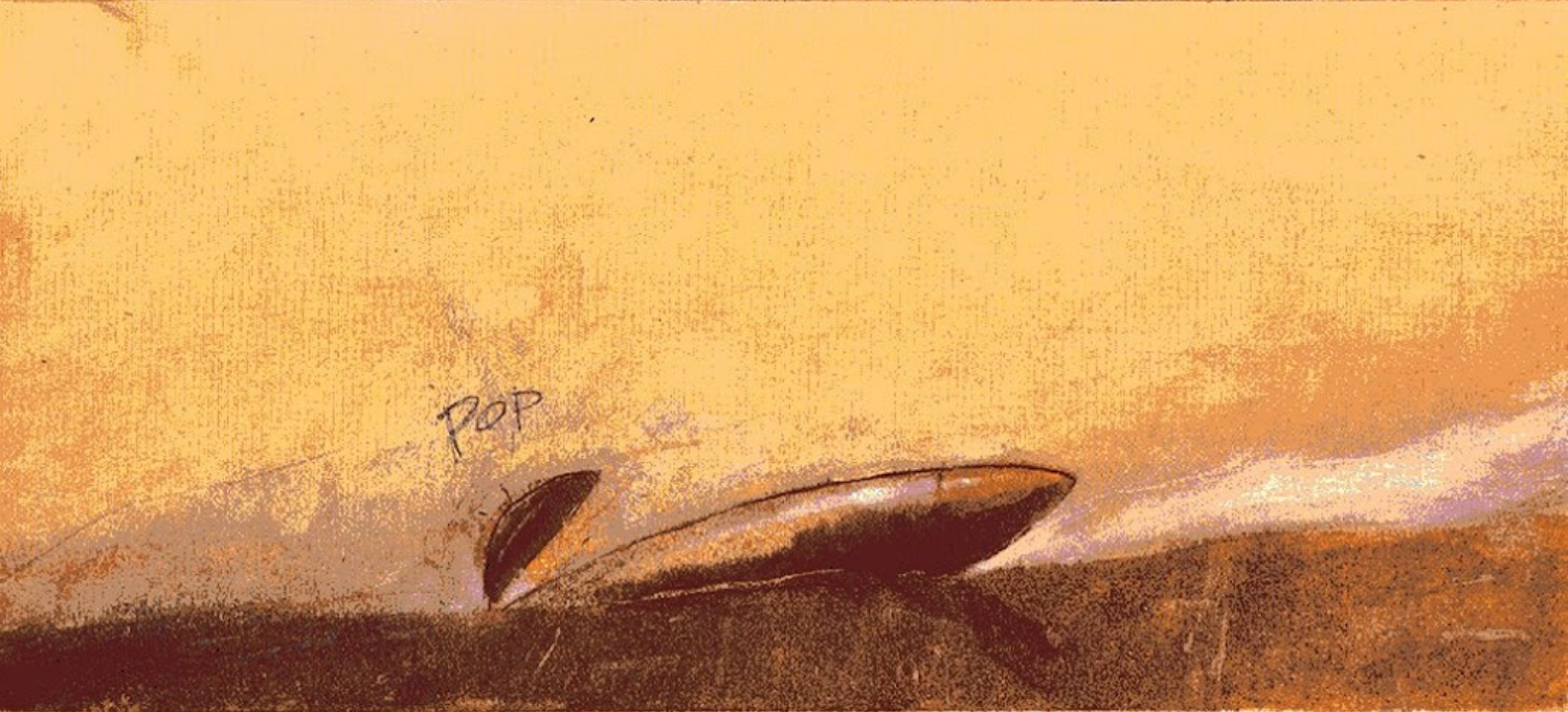
Adapted by Kent Williams and John Van Fleet

DARK THEY WERE AND GOLDEN EYED is a kind of parable about genetics and environment. How much of what we are is what we were born with, in our heart's blood, we wonder. And how much is what a time and place do to our inheritance along the way to the grave? The problem will probably remain unsolved in this century and beyond. Nevertheless, being curious about such ideas, I had to reckon up some golden years and hand them out from Martians to Earthmen, to see if they would work.

RAY

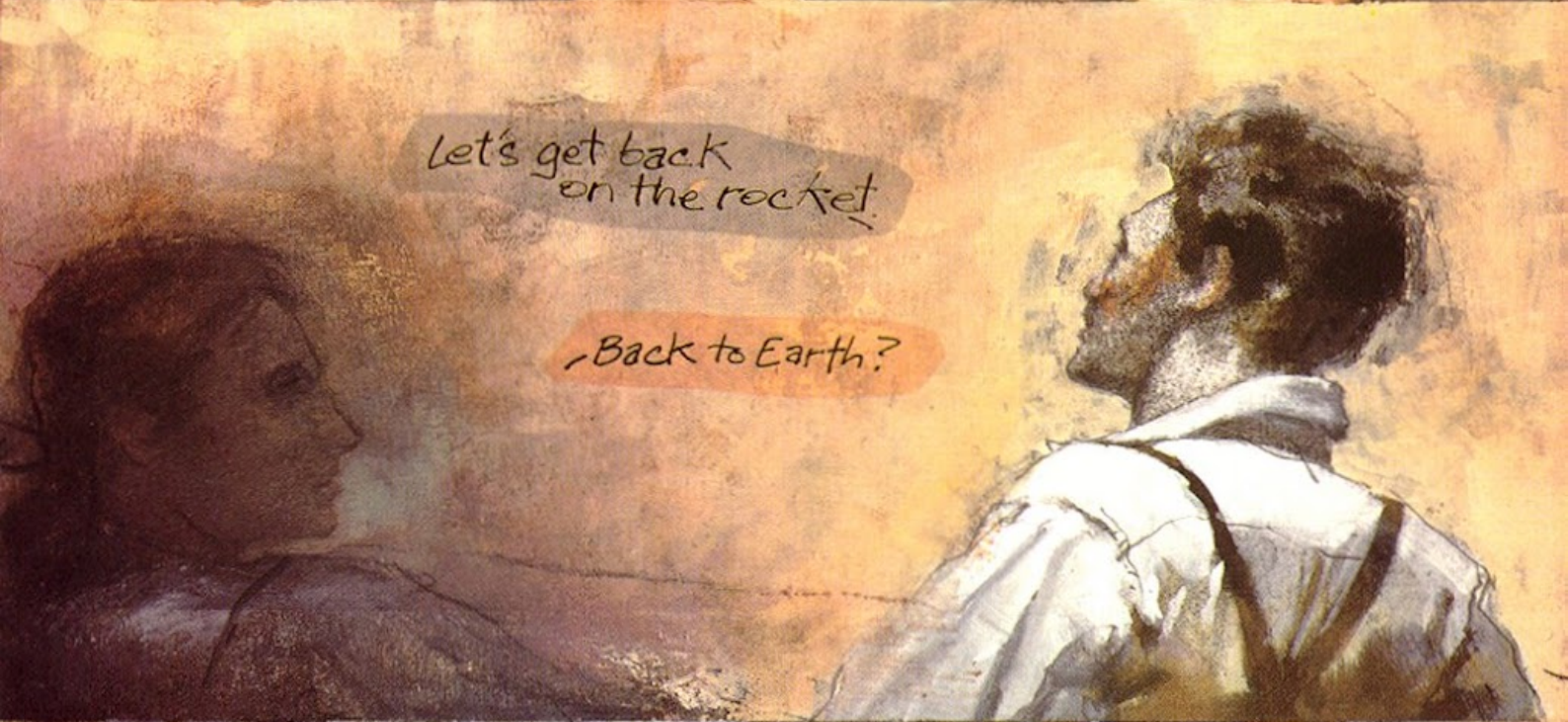
DARK THEY WERE, AND GOLDEN-EYED
KENT WILLIAMS
JOHN VAN FLEET





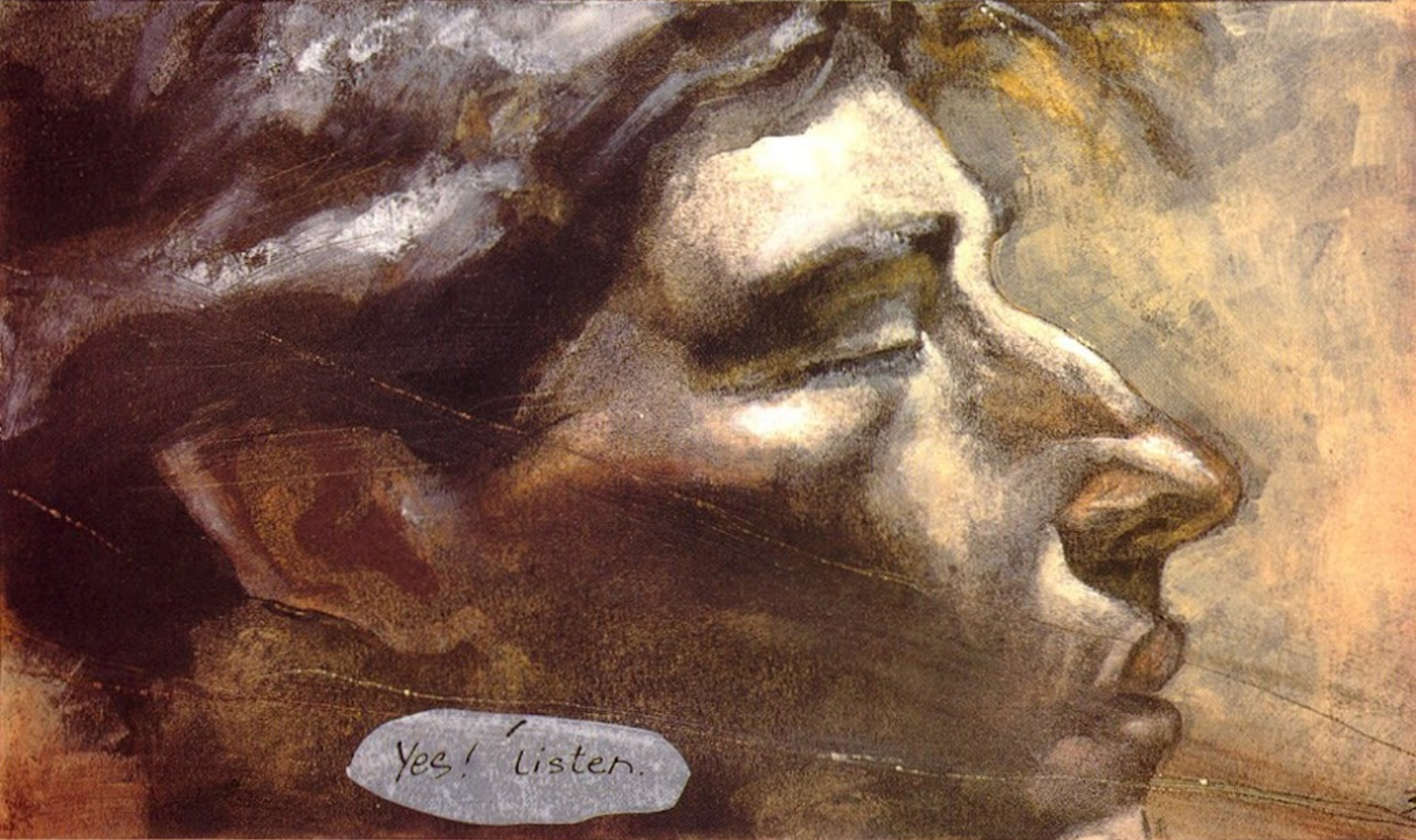


What's wrong?

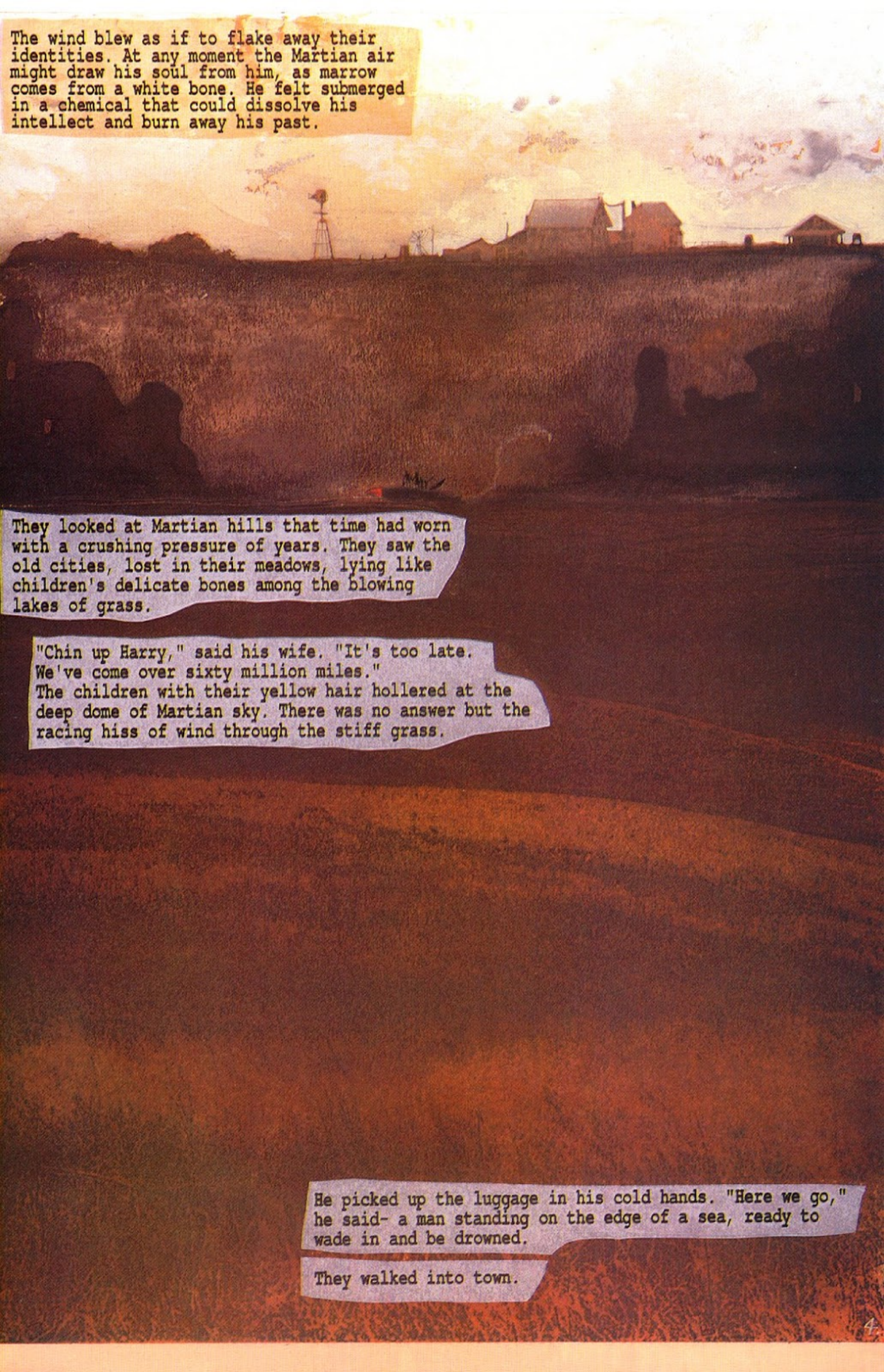


Let's get back
on the rocket

Back to Earth?



Yes! Listen.



The wind blew as if to flake away their identities. At any moment the Martian air might draw his soul from him, as marrow comes from a white bone. He felt submerged in a chemical that could dissolve his intellect and burn away his past.

They looked at Martian hills that time had worn with a crushing pressure of years. They saw the old cities, lost in their meadows, lying like children's delicate bones among the blowing lakes of grass.

"Chin up Harry," said his wife. "It's too late. We've come over sixty million miles."

The children with their yellow hair hollered at the deep dome of Martian sky. There was no answer but the racing hiss of wind through the stiff grass.

He picked up the luggage in his cold hands. "Here we go," he said- a man standing on the edge of a sea, ready to wade in and be drowned.

They walked into town.

4

their name was Bittering. Harry and his wife Cora; Dan, Laura, and David. They built a small white cottage and ate good breakfasts there, but the fear was never gone.

—For heaven's Sake, Cora, let's buy tickets for home.

We don't belong here, We're Earth People.

One day the atom bomb will fix Earth. Then we'll be safe.

This is 'Mars. It was meant for Martians.

TICK-TOCK TIME TO GET UP

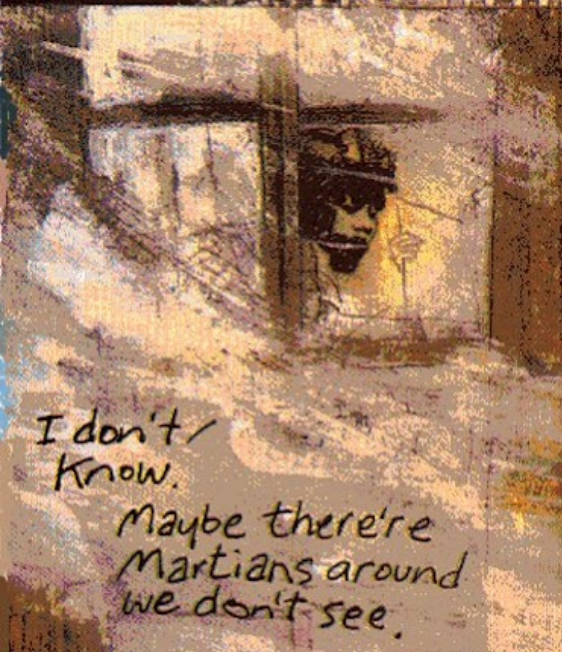
Safe and insane!

Colonial days all over again! Why, in ten years there'll be a million Earthmen on Mars.

Big cities, everything! They said we'd fail. Said the Martians would resent our invasion.

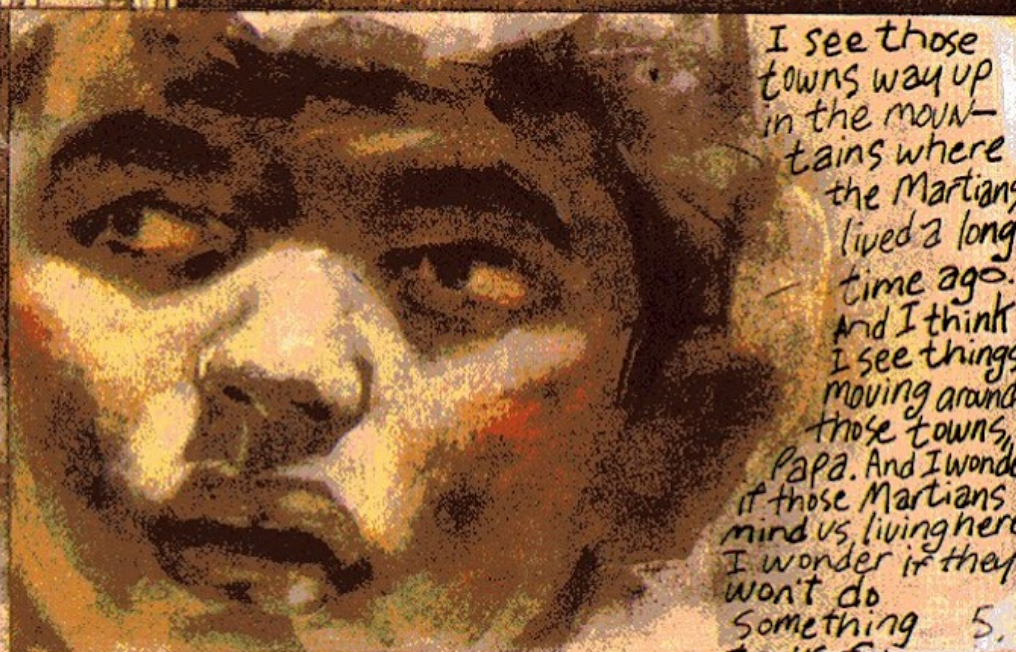
But did we find any Martians? Not a living soul!

Oh, we found their empty cities, but not one of them. Right?



I don't know.

Maybe there're Martians around we don't see.



I see those towns way up in the mountains where the Martians lived a long time ago. And I think I see things moving around those towns, Papa. And I wonder if those Martians mind us living here. I wonder if they won't do something to us for living here.



Nonsense!
— All dead cities have ghosts in them.
You see a staircase and you wonder
what Martians looked like climbing
it.

You see Martian paintings and
you wonder what the painter
was like. You make a little ghost
in your mind, a memory.



It's quite natural. Imagination.

— you haven't been prowling
up in those ruins, have you?

No, Papa. —

— See you stay away from
them. Pass the jam.

Something happened
that afternoon.



— mother, Father—
the war, Earth!

"A radio flash just came. Atom bombs hit
New York! All the space rockets blown up.
No more rockets to Mars, ever!"
"Oh, Harry!" The mother held onto her
husband and daughter.
"Are you sure, Laura?" asked the
father, quietly.
Laura wept. "We're stranded on
Mars, forever and ever!"

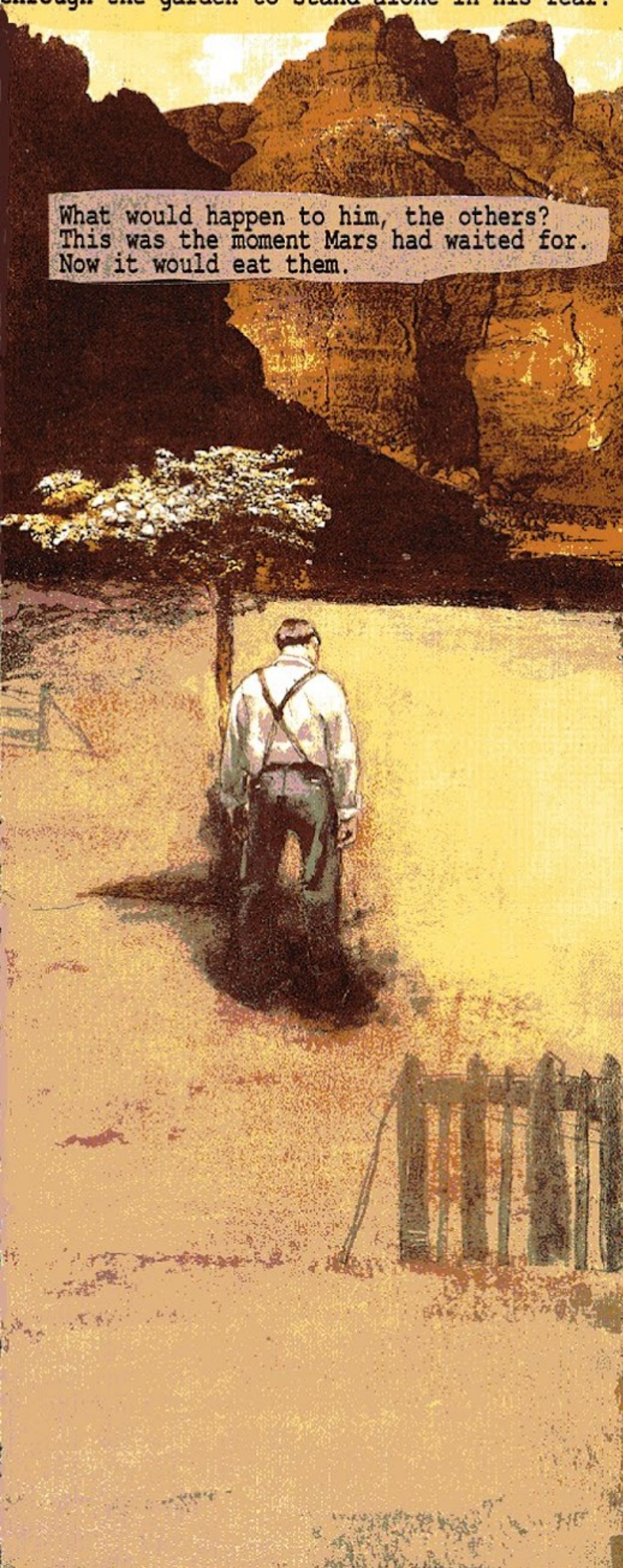
For a long time there was
only the sound of the wind
in the late afternoon.



Alone, thought Bittering. Only a
thousand of us here. No way back.
No way. No way. Sweat poured from
his face and his body; he was
drenched in the hotness of his fear.
"Father, what will we do?"
"Go about our business, of course.
Raise crops and children. Wait.
Keep things going until the war
ends and the rockets come again."

In the following days, Bittering wandered often through the garden to stand alone in his fear.

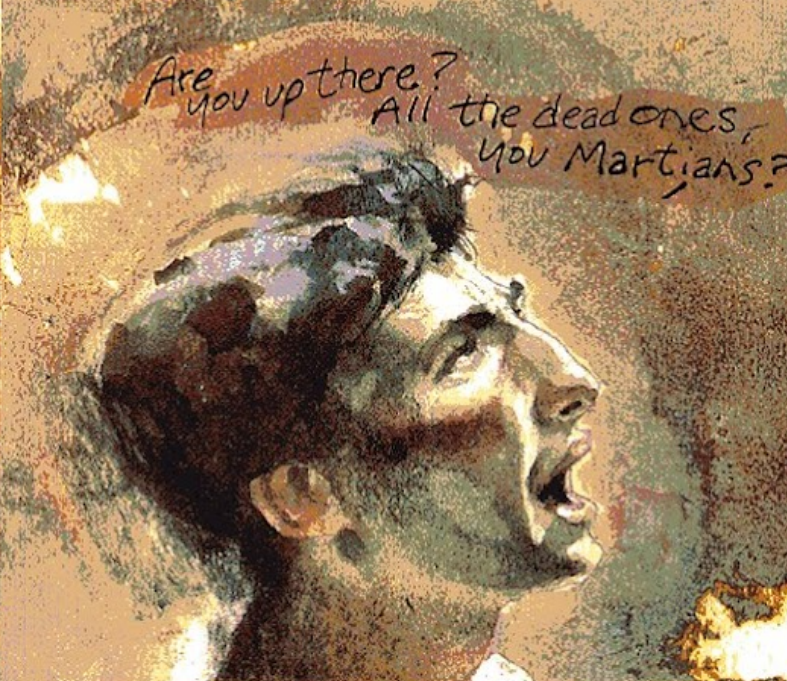
What would happen to him, the others?
This was the moment Mars had waited for.
Now it would eat them.



He glanced up from the Martian mountains. Once Martians had built cities, named cities; climbed mountains, named mountains; sailed seas, named seas. Mountains melted, seas drained, cities tumbled. In spite of this, the Earthmen had felt a silent guilt at putting new names to these ancient hills and valleys.

Think. Keep thinking. Different things. Keep your mind free of Earth, the atom war, the lost rockets.

Are you up there?
All the dead ones,
You Martians?



Well, here
we are, alone...



...helpless.

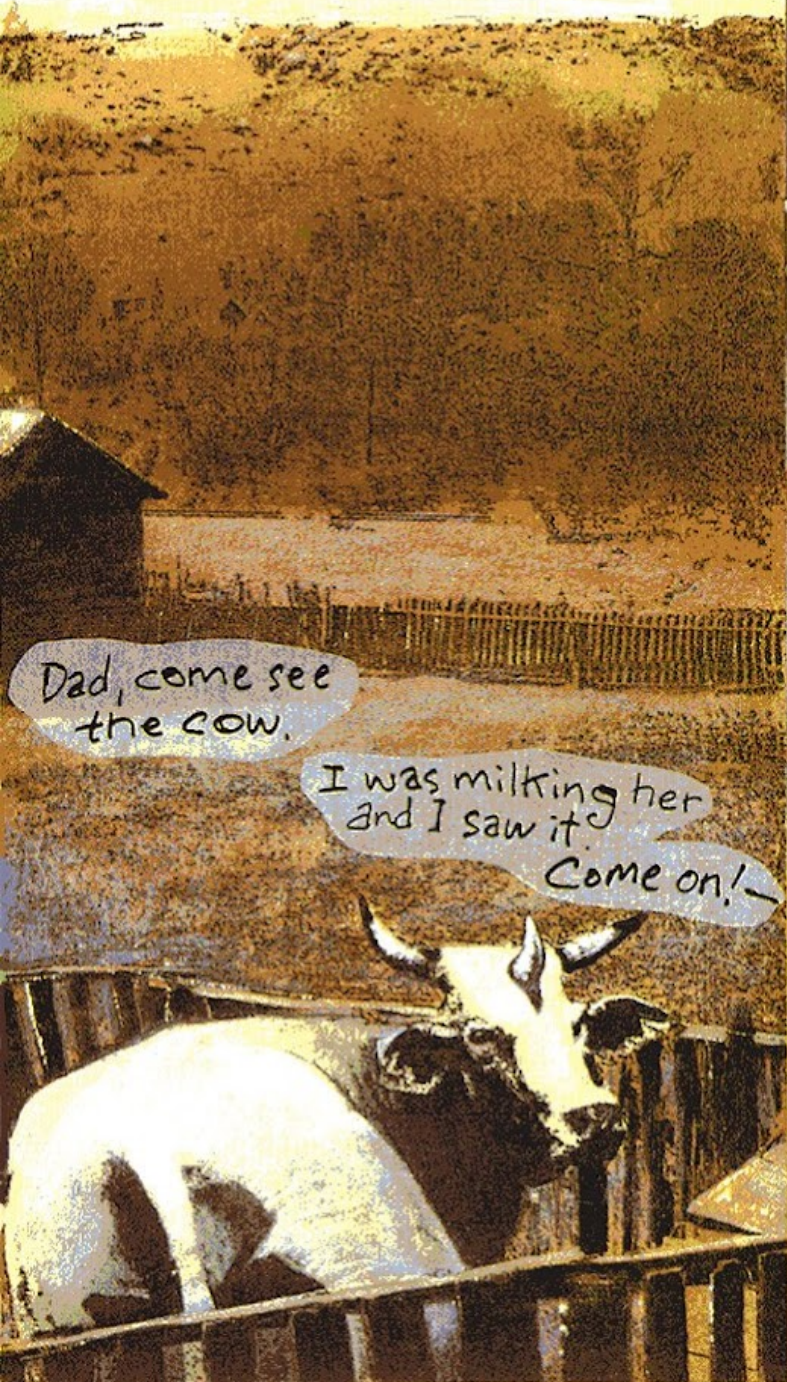


"Cora, these blossoms!"
She handled them.
"Do you see? They're different. They've
changed! They're not peach blossoms any
more!"
"Look all right to me," she said.
"They're not. They're wrong! I can't tell
how. An extra petal, a leaf, or something,
the color, the smell!"
The children ran out in time to see their
father hurrying about the garden, pulling
up radishes, onions, and carrots from their
beds.
"Cora, come look!"
"Do they look like carrots?"
"Yes...no." She hesitated. "I don't know."
"They're changed."
"Perhaps."
"Cora, what's happening?" He ran across
the garden. Each tree felt his touch.
"The roses. The roses. They're turning
green!"

We must get away!
We'll eat this stuff and then
we'll change -
who knows to what?

It's not
poisoned.)

But it is. Subtly. A bit.
A very little bit.
We mustn't touch it.



Dad, come see
the cow.

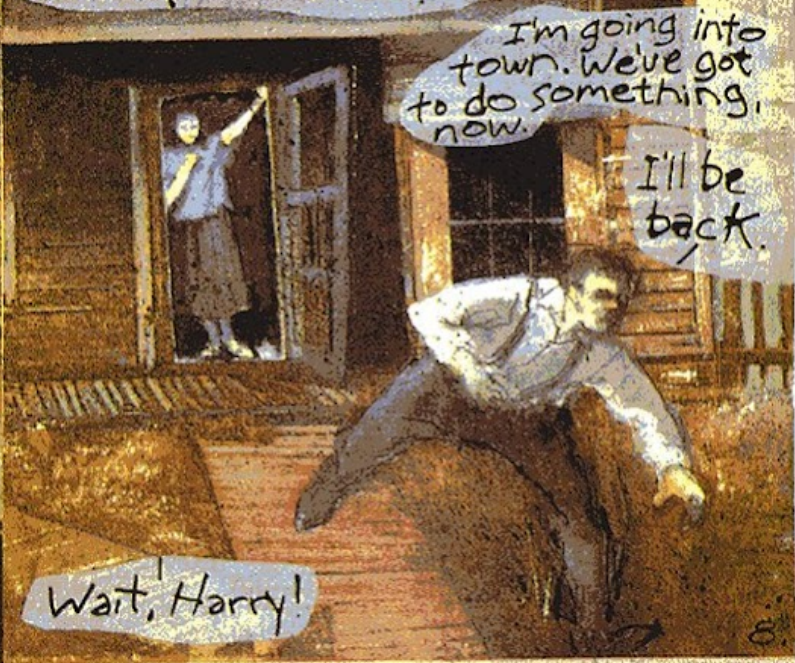
I was milking her
and I saw it.

Come on!



Even the house,
The wind has
done some-
thing to it.
The air's
burned it.
It's not an
Earthman's
house
any
more.

Oh, your imagination!



I'm going into
town. We've got
to do something
now.

I'll be
back.

Wait, Harry!

In town, the men sat with their hands on their knees, conversing with great leisure and ease.

Hello Harry.

Look, you did hear the news the other day, didn't you?

They nodded and laughed.

"Sure. Sure, Harry."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Do, Harry, do? What can we do?"

"Build a rocket, that's what!"

"A rocket, Harry? To go back to all that trouble? Oh, Harry!"

Bittering wanted to cry. "You've got to work with me. If we stay here, we'll all change. Something in the air. A Martian virus, maybe; some seed, or a pollen. Listen to me!"

Everyone laughed.

Sam, your eyes...

What about them, Harry?

"Didn't they used to be grey?"

"Well now, I don't remember."

"They were, weren't they?"

"Why do you ask, Harry?"

"Because now they're kind of yellow-colored."

"Is that so, Harry?" Sam said, casually.

"And you're taller and thinner---"

"You might be right, Harry."

"Sam, you shouldn't have yellow eyes."

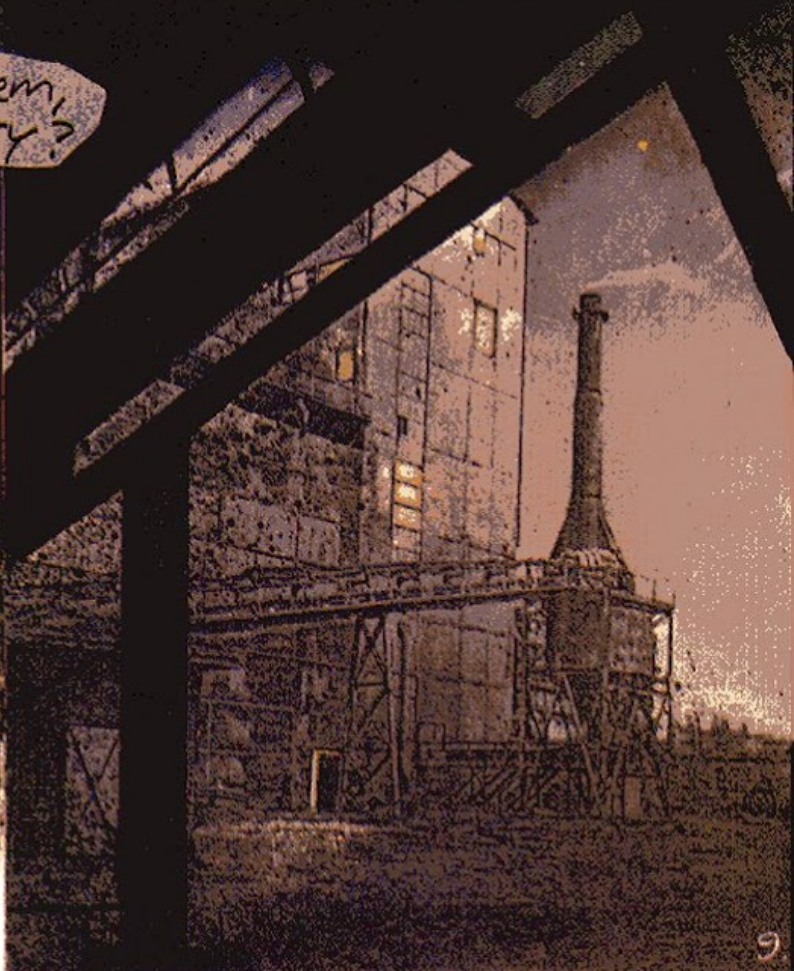
Sam.

Yes, Harry?

Will you help me build a rocket?

"Harry, I got a whole load of metal and some blueprints. You want to work in my metal shop on a rocket, you're welcome. You should be able to construct a right pretty rocket, if you work alone, in about thirty years."

Harry Bittering moved into the metal shop and began to build the rocket.



The nights were full of wind that blew down the empty moonlit sea meadows past the little white chess cities lying for their twelve-thousandth year in the shallows.

Lying abed, Mr. Bittering felt his bones shifted, shaped, melted like gold. His wife, lying beside him, was dark from many sunny afternoons. Dark she was, and golden-eyed, burnt almost black by the sun.



"Iorrt.
Iorrt."

It was the Martian word for Earth.
He knew no Martian.

The days were full of metal sound. He laid the frame of the rocket with the reluctant help of three indifferent men. He grew very tired in an hour or so and had to sit down.



"The altitude, Ha Ha."

"Are you eating, Harry?"

"You're getting thinner, Harry."

"I'm not!"

"And taller."

"Liar."

His wife took him aside a few days later.

"You must eat."

"yes."

"And take the rest of the day off, she said. The children want to swim in the canals and hike. Please come along."

"I can't waste time. This is a crisis!"

"Just for an hour," she urged. "A swim'll do you good."

He rose, sweating. "All right, all right. Leave me alone. I'll come."

"Good for you, Harry."

The sun was hot, the day quiet.

He saw the yellow eyes of his wife and his children, their eyes that were never yellow before. He saw their skin baking brown.



A few tremblings shook him, but were carried off in waves of pleasant heat as he lay in the sun. He was too tired to be afraid.



-Cora, how long have your eyes been yellow?

-Always, I guess.

They didn't change from brown in the last three months?

No. Why do you ask?

They sat there.

The children's eyes, they're yellow, too.

Sometimes growing children's eyes change color.

Maybe we're children too. At least to Mars. Ha, that's a thought.

-Think I'll swim.

They leaped into the canal water, and he let himself sink down and down to the bottom like a golden statue and lie there in green silence. All was water-quiet and deep, all was peace. He felt the steady, slow current drift him easily. He saw the sky submerged above him, the sun made Martian by atmosphere and time and space. He let himself drift up through the soft light.

What? Utha. — you know.

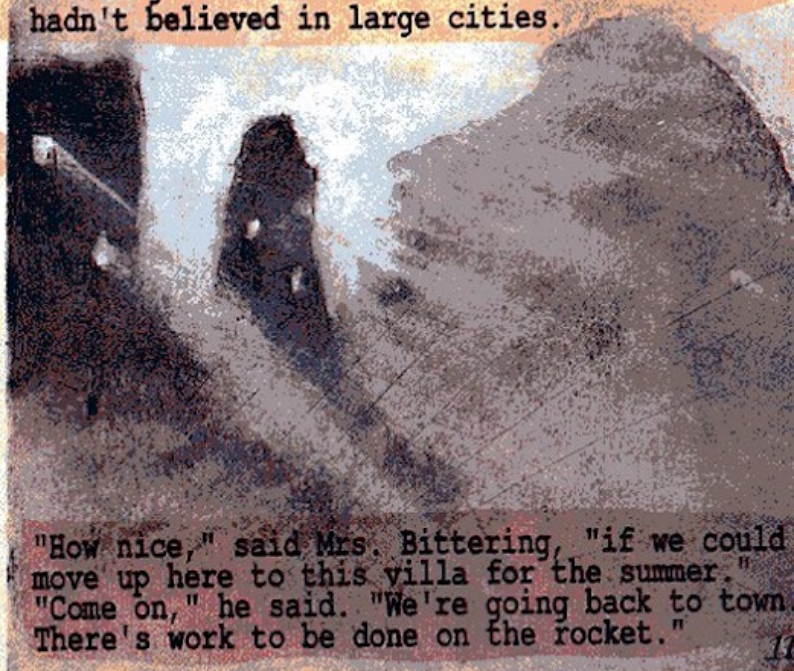


Utha's the Martian word for father.

Where did you learn it?

I don't know. Around.

They walked into the hills. They strolled on old mosaic paths, beside still pumping fountains. They came to a small deserted Martian villa with a good view of the valley. It was on top of a hill. Blue marble halls, large murals, a swimming pool. It was refreshing in this hot summertime. The Martians hadn't believed in large cities.



"How nice," said Mrs. Bittering, "if we could move up here to this villa for the summer." "Come on," he said. "We're going back to town. There's work to be done on the rocket."

But as he worked that night, the thought of the cool blue marble villa entered his mind. As the hours passed, the rocket seemed less important.



In the flow of days and weeks, the rocket receded and dwindled. The old fever was gone.

WORK. 'You can finish that rocket in the autumn, when it's cooler.

I-I got the frame all set up.



"In the autumn is better." Their voices were lazy in the heat.

"Got to work," he said.

"Autumn," they reasoned. And they sounded so sensible, so right.

"Autumn would be best," he thought. "Plenty of time, then."

He heard the men murmuring on the porch of his metal shop.

Everyone's going,
you heard?

All going, that's
right.

Going where?



Up to the villas.

Yeah, Harry, I'm going.

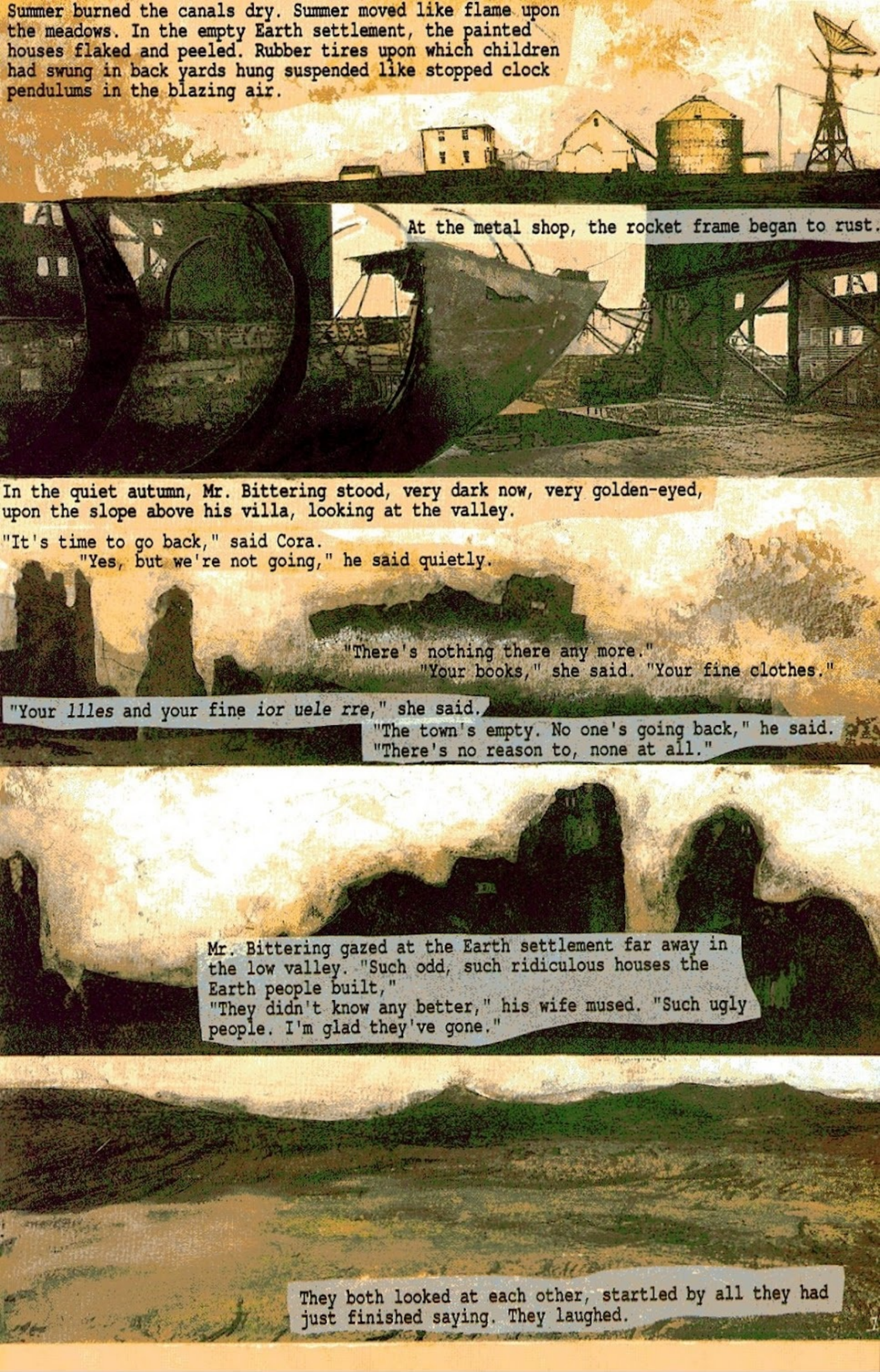
So is Sam. Arent you Sam?

That's right, Harry.

What about you?

I've got work to do here.

Summer burned the canals dry. Summer moved like flame upon the meadows. In the empty Earth settlement, the painted houses flaked and peeled. Rubber tires upon which children had swung in back yards hung suspended like stopped clock pendulums in the blazing air.



At the metal shop, the rocket frame began to rust.

In the quiet autumn, Mr. Bittering stood, very dark now, very golden-eyed, upon the slope above his villa, looking at the valley.

"It's time to go back," said Cora.

"Yes, but we're not going," he said quietly.

"There's nothing there any more."

"Your books," she said. "Your fine clothes."

"Your liles and your fine ior uele rre," she said.

"The town's empty. No one's going back," he said.

"There's no reason to, none at all."

Mr. Bittering gazed at the Earth settlement far away in the low valley. "Such odd, such ridiculous houses the Earth people built,"

"They didn't know any better," his wife mused. "Such ugly people. I'm glad they've gone."

They both looked at each other, startled by all they had just finished saying. They laughed.



The town's -
empty...



But we found
native life
in the hills, sir.

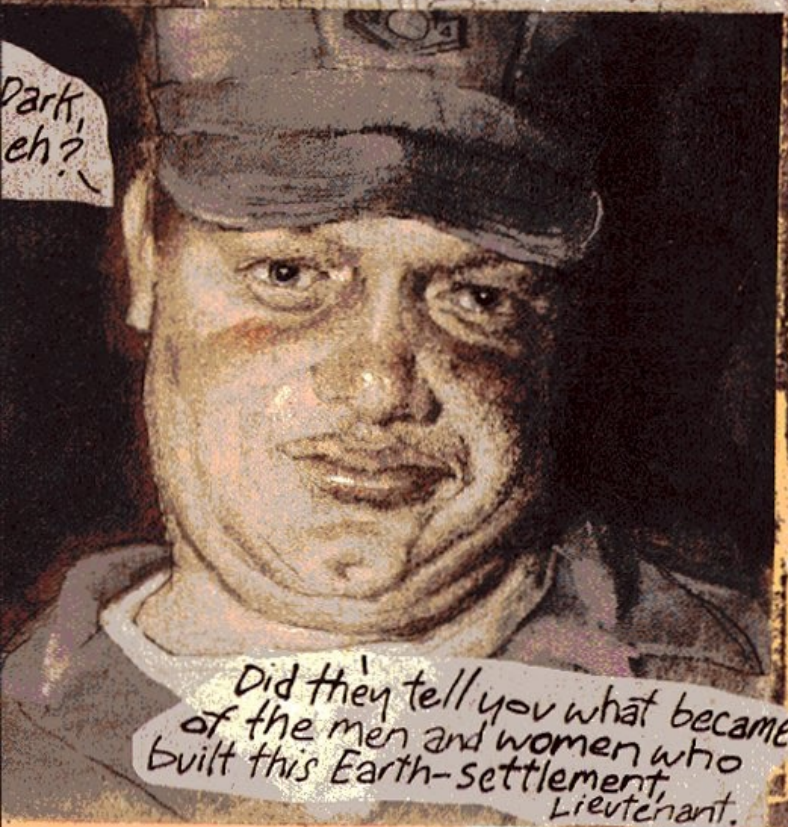
Dark people. Yellow eyes.
Martians

Very friendly. We
talked a bit,
not much.

They
learn
English
fast.



Dark,
eh?



Did they tell you what became
of the men and women who
built this Earth-settlement,
Lieutenant.



They hadn't the
foggiest notion, sir.

Strange.
you think those
martians killed
them.



- They look surprisingly
peaceful to me. Chances are
a plague did this town in.



Perhaps.
I suppose this is one
of those mysteries
we'll never solve.
One of those
mysteries you
read about.



Lots to be done,
Lieutenant.



New settlements, mining sites, minerals to be looked for. Bacteriological specimens taken. The work, all the work. And the old records were lost. We'll have a job of remapping to do, renaming the mountains and rivers and such."

The lieutenant snapped his gaze from the blue color and the quiet mist of the hills far beyond the town.
"What? Oh, yes, sir!"

THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN

Adapted by P. Craig Russell

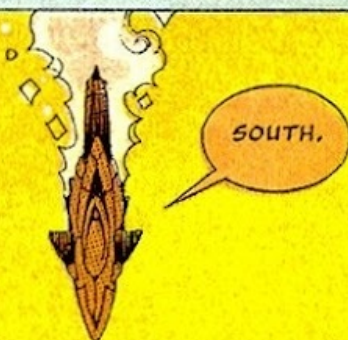
THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN is not a story but a myth. I knew that when I wrote it. We will never go anywhere near the sun. It is utterly impossible. That being so, I take refuge and courage from the Greek and Roman myths I cut my teeth on when I was six and seven, plus the Christian myths that I learned soon after. You cannot part the Red Sea with a gesture or walk into a lion's den, like Daniel, and lie down with beasts, or see a wheel in a wheel, way in the middle of the air. But if you write about it in just the proper way people will believe that an incredible vehicle, one day in the future, took some astronauts to borrow a cup of sun.

RAY

"SOUTH," SAID THE CAPTAIN.
"BUT," SAID HIS CREW, "THERE SIMPLY AREN'T ANY DIRECTIONS OUT HERE IN SPACE."



HE SHUT HIS EYES AND THOUGHT ABOUT THE SMOULDERING, WARM, FARAWAY LAND, HIS BREATH MOVING GENTLY IN HIS MOUTH. "SOUTH," HE NODDED SLOWLY TO HIMSELF.



The Golden Apples of the Sun

P.C.R.

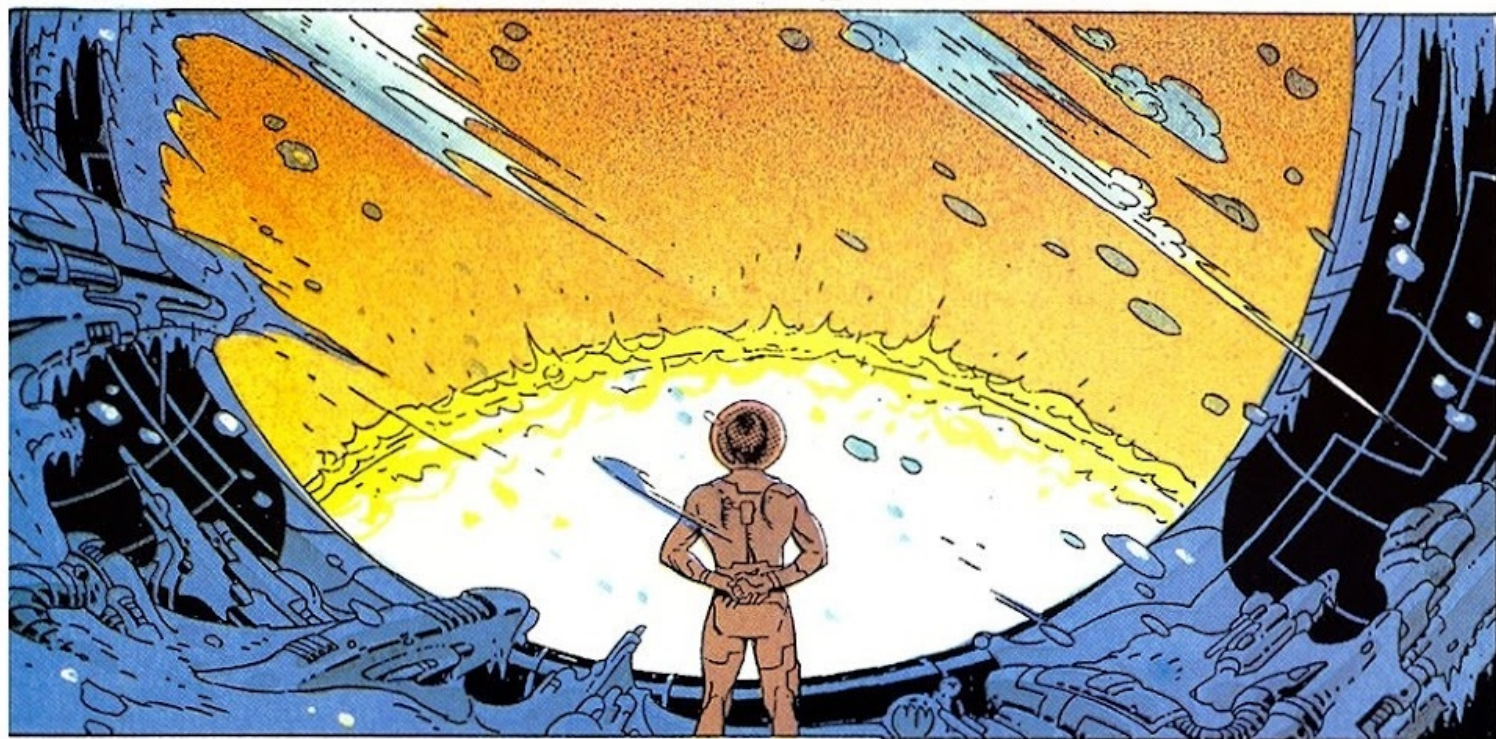
THEIR ROCKET WAS THE COPA DE ORO, ALSO NAMED THE PROMETHEUS AND THE ICARUS, AND THEIR DESTINATION IN ALL REALITY WAS THE BLAZING NOONDAY SUN.



AND NOW AS THE SUN BOILED UP AT THEM THEY REMEMBERED A SCORE OF VERSES AND QUOTATIONS.

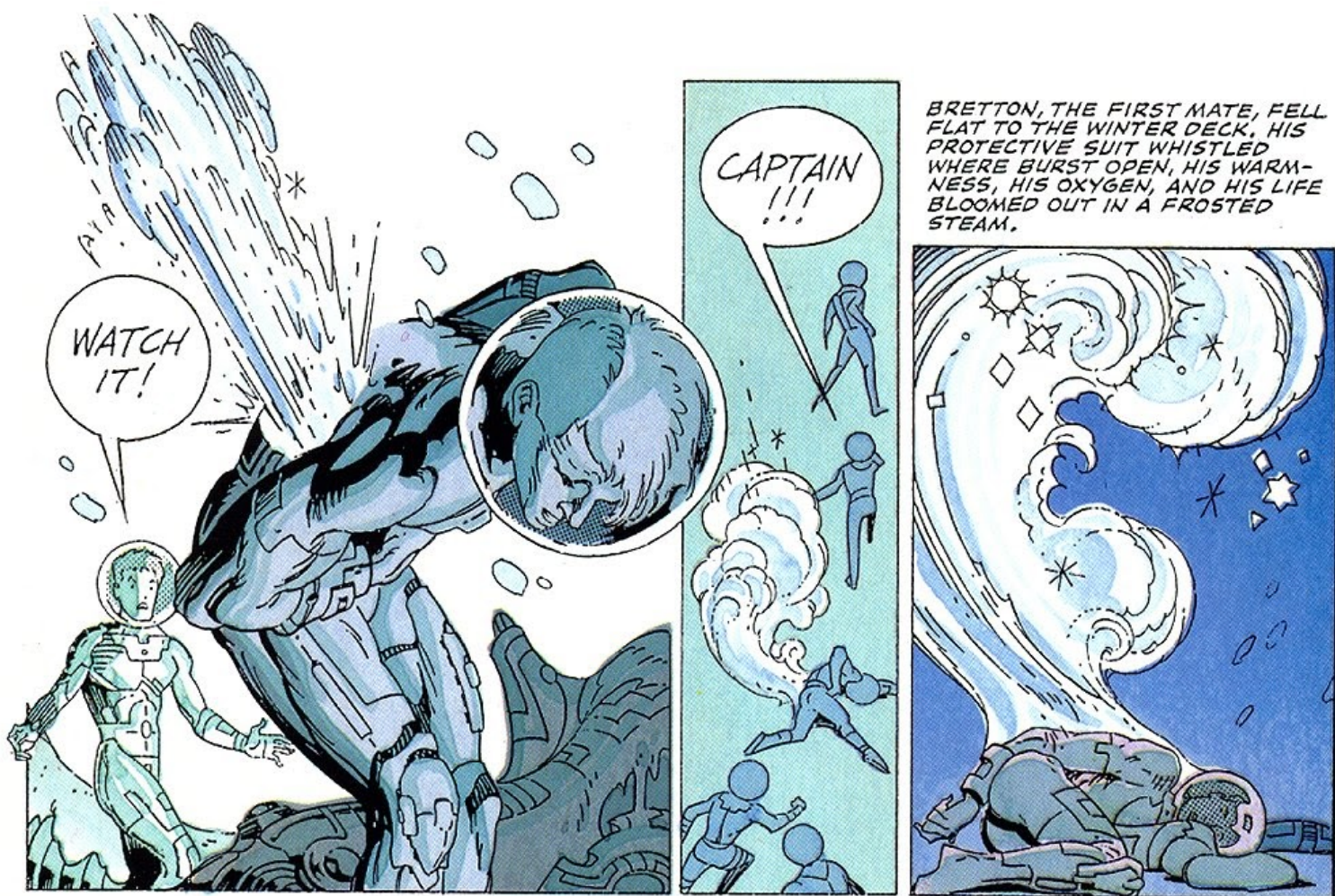


THE CAPTAIN STARED FROM THE HUGE DARK-LENSED PORT, AND THERE INDEED WAS THE SUN, AND TO GO TO THAT SUN AND TOUCH IT AND STEAL PART OF IT AWAY WAS HIS QUIET AND SINGLE IDEA.



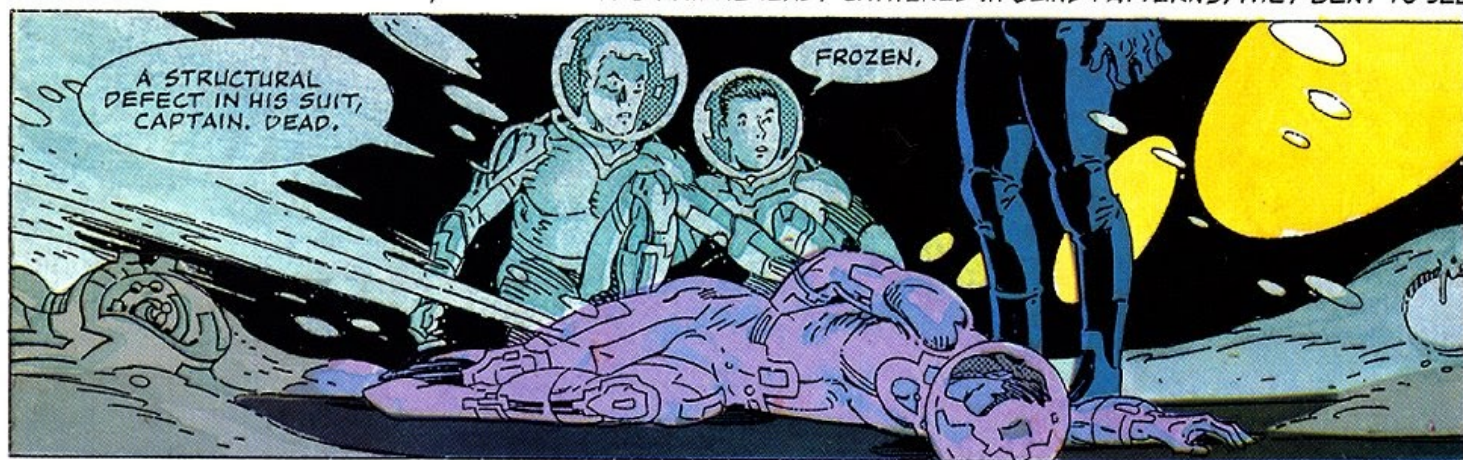
IN THIS SHIP WERE COMBINED THE COOLY DELICATE AND THE COLDLY PRACTICAL. THROUGH CORRIDORS OF ICE AND MILK-FROST, AMMONIATED WINTER AND STORMING SNOWFLAKES BLEW. ANY SPARK FROM THAT VAST HEARTH BURNING OUT THERE THAT MIGHT SEEP THROUGH WOULD FIND WINTER, SLUMBERING HERE LIKE ALL THE COLDEST HOURS OF FEBRUARY.



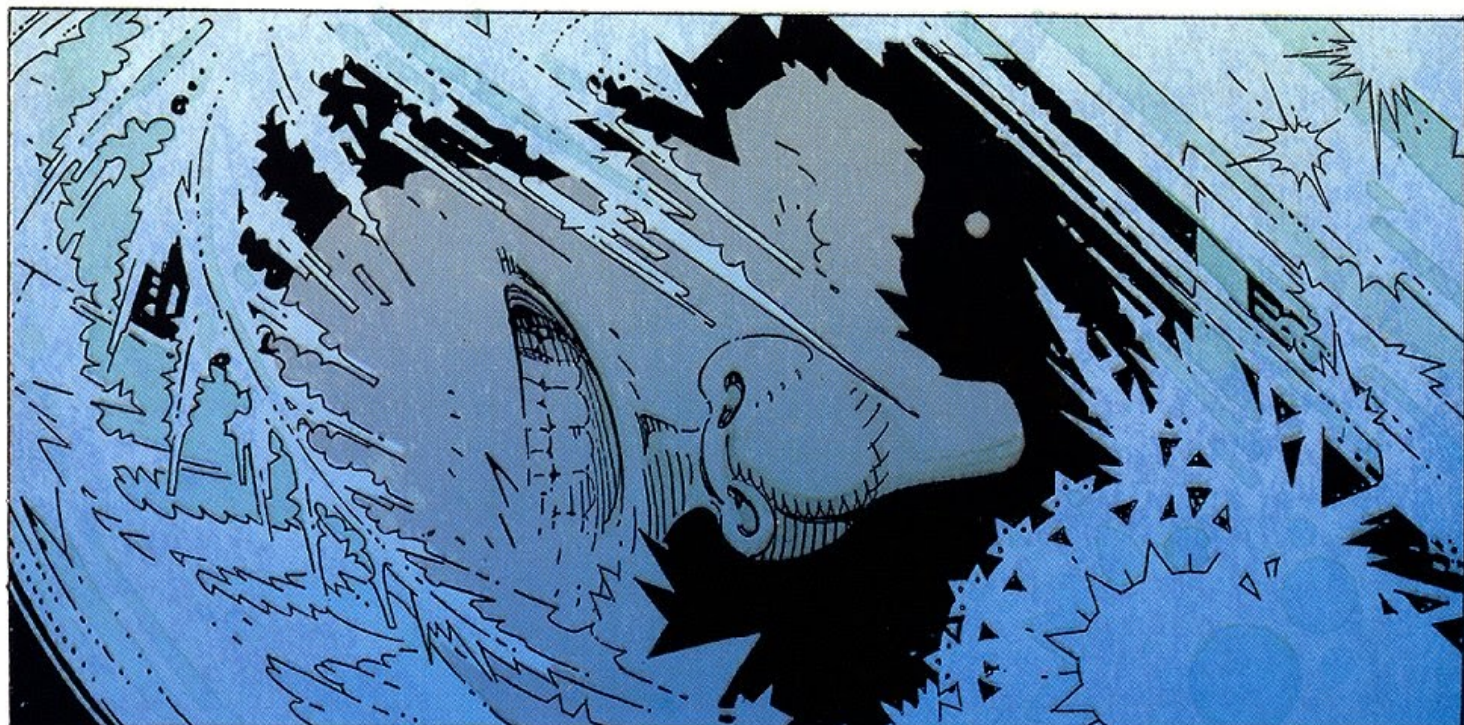


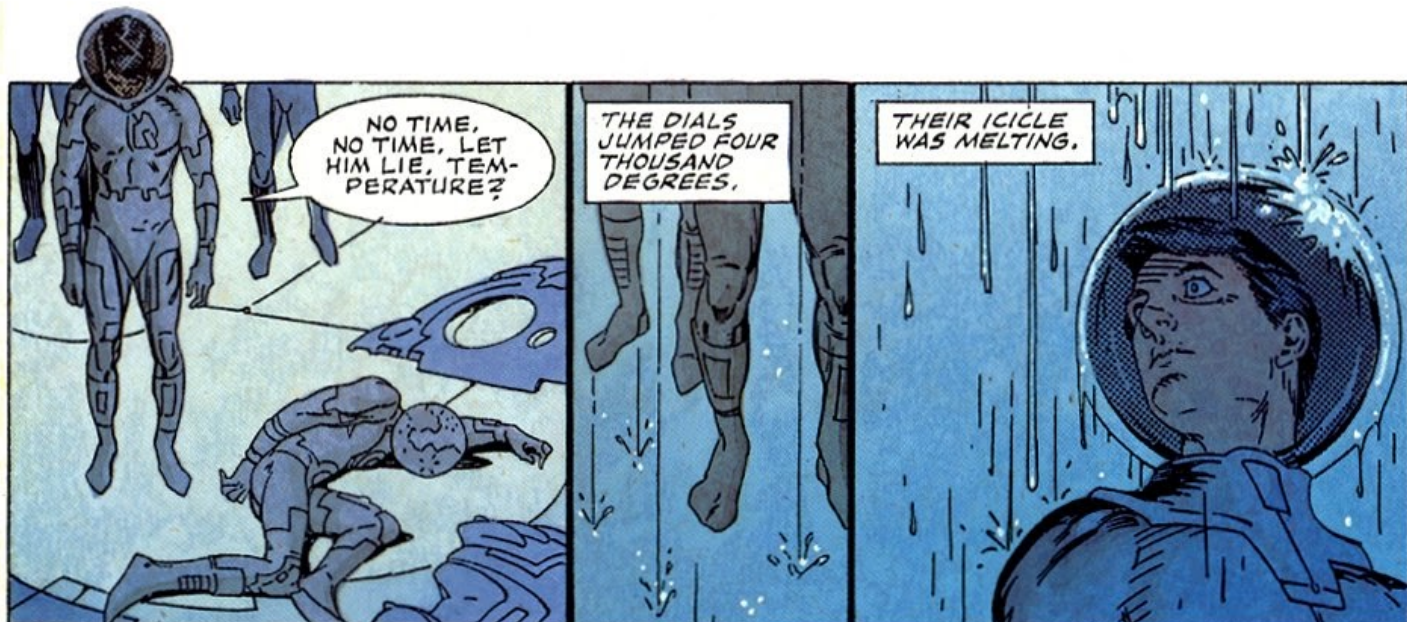
BRETTON, THE FIRST MATE, FELL FLAT TO THE WINTER DECK, HIS PROTECTIVE SUIT WHISTLED WHERE BURST OPEN, HIS WARMNESS, HIS OXYGEN, AND HIS LIFE BLOOMED OUT IN A FROSTED STEAM.

INSIDE BRETTON'S FACE-MASK, MILK CRYSTALS HAD ALREADY GATHERED IN BLIND PATTERNS, THEY BENT TO SEE



THE CAPTAIN GAZED DOWN UPON THE FROSTED STATUE AND THE TWINKLING CRYSTALS THAT ICED OVER IT AS HE WATCHED. IRONY OF THE COOLEST SORT, HE THOUGHT, A MAN AFRAID OF FIRE, AND KILLED BY FROST,

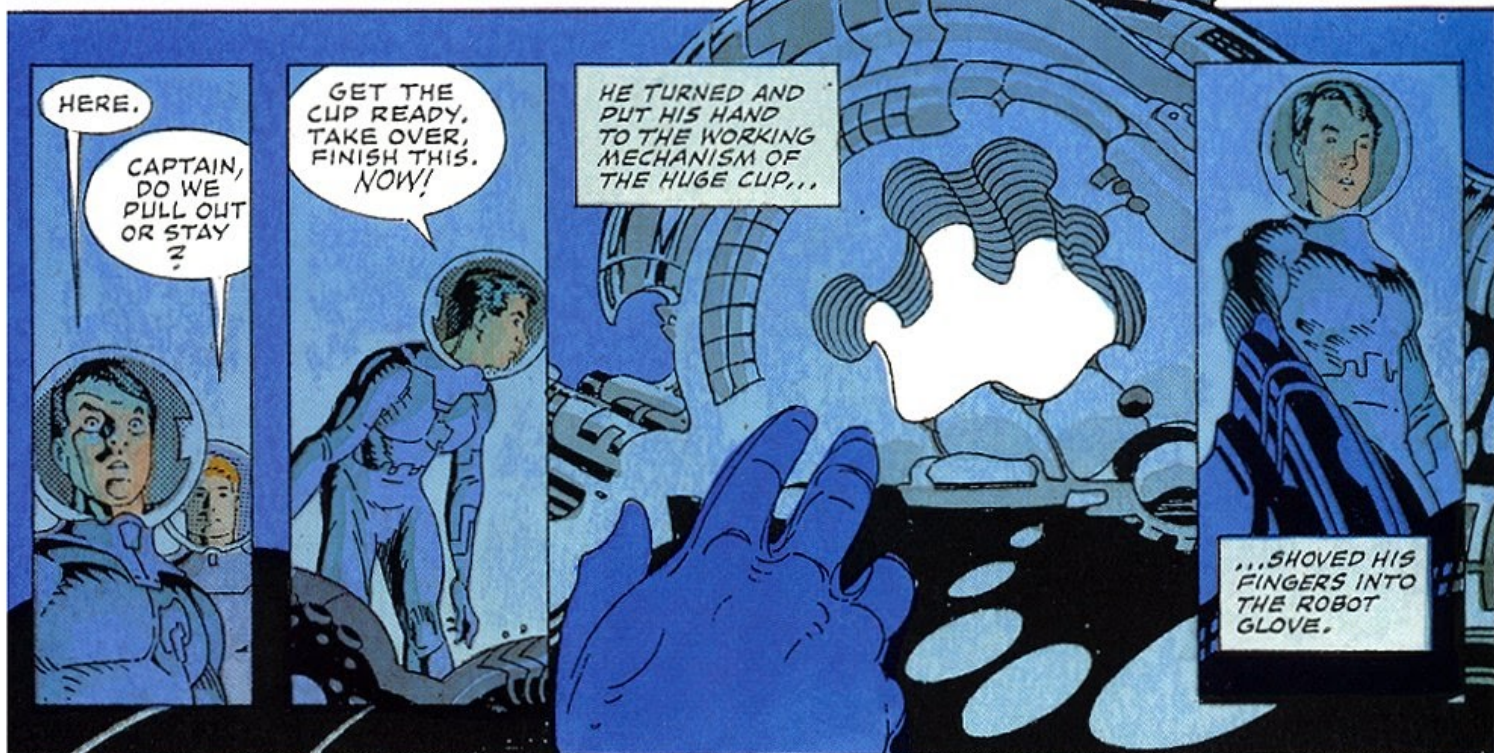




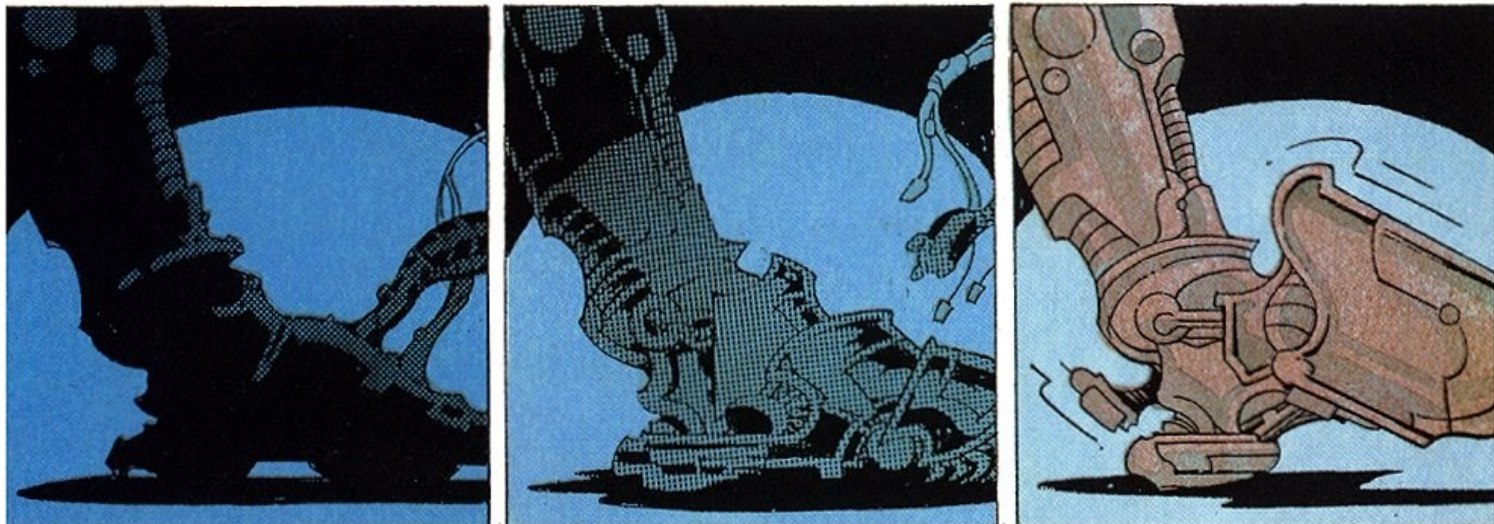
THE CAPTAIN BENT IN THE WARM RAIN, CURSING, FELT HIS HANDS RUN OVER THE COLD MACHINE, FELT THEM BURROW AND SEARCH, AND WHILE HE WORKED HE SAW A FUTURE WHICH WAS REMOVED FROM THEM BY THE MEREST BREATH,



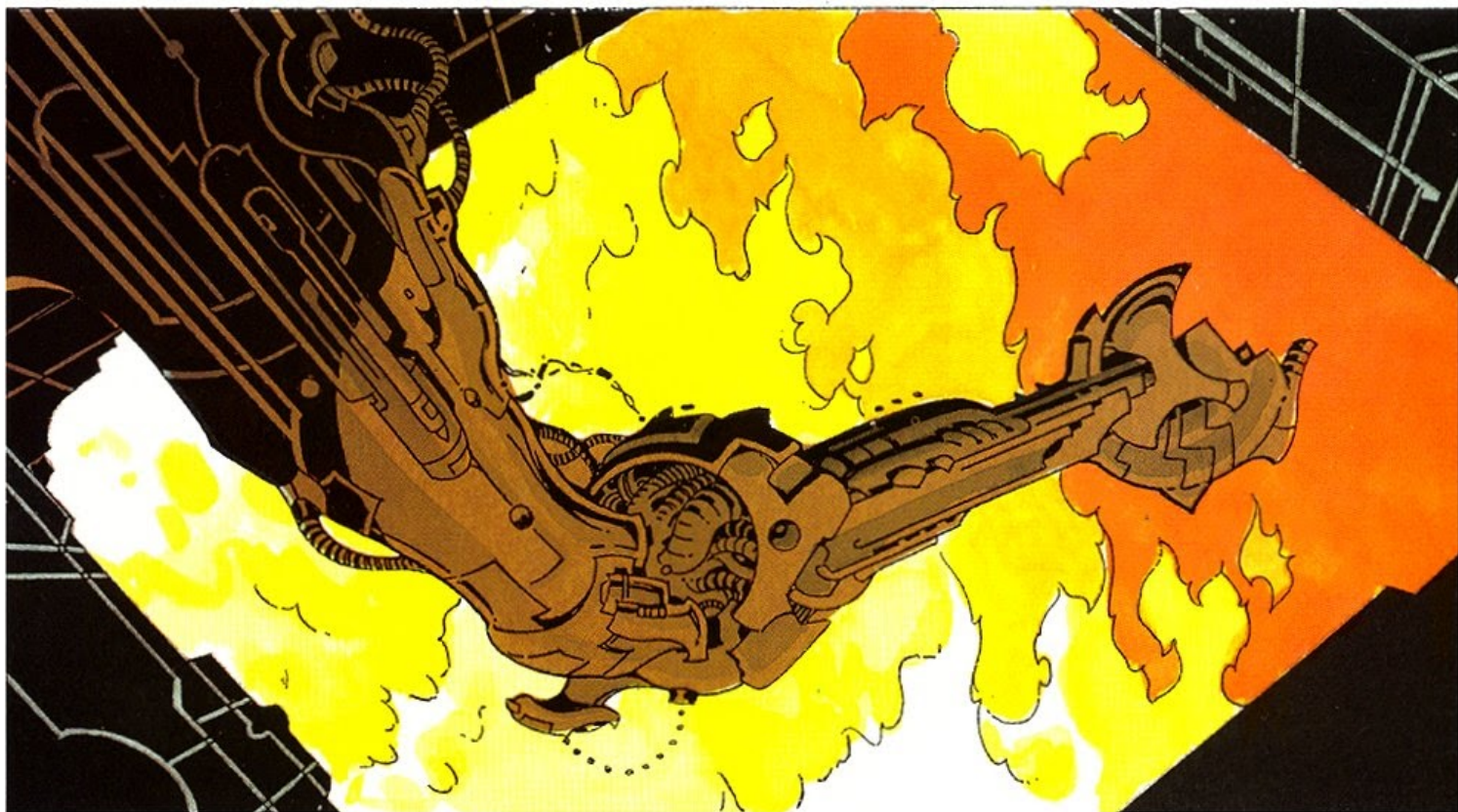
THE NIGHTMARE FLICKED AWAY.



A TWITCH OF HIS HAND HERE MOVED A GIGANTIC HAND, WITH GIGANTIC METAL FINGERS, FROM THE BOWELS OF THE SHIP.



NOW, NOW THE GREAT METAL HAND SLID OUT HOLDING THE HUGE COPA DE ORO, BREATHLESS, INTO THE IRON FURNACE, THE BODILESS BODY AND THE FLESHLESS FLESH OF THE SUN.



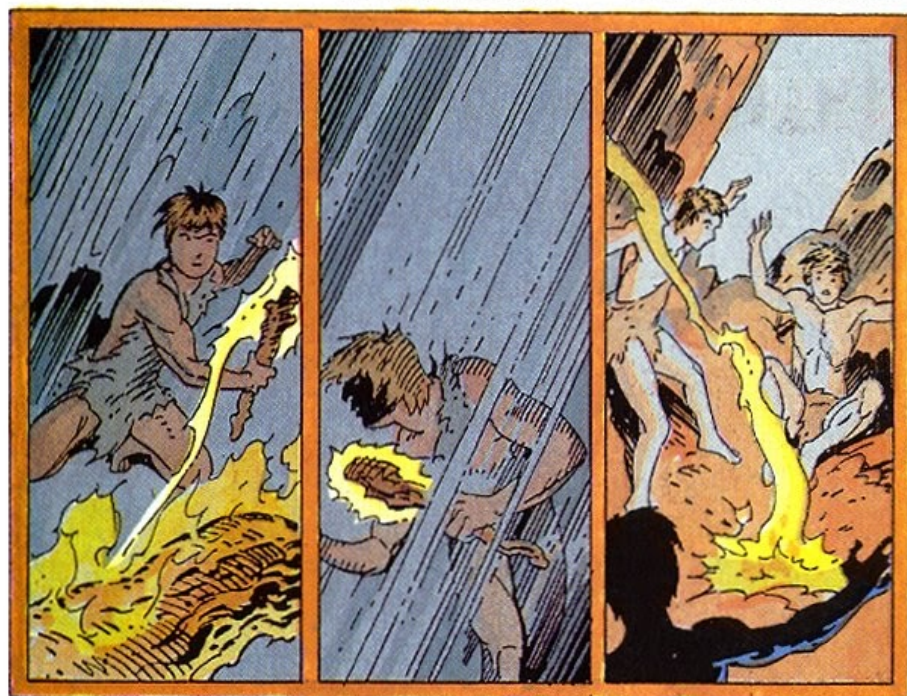
A MILLION YEARS AGO, THOUGHT THE CAPTAIN AS HE MOVED THE HAND AND THE CUP, A MILLION YEARS AGO A NAKED MAN ON A LONELY NORTHERN TRAIL SAW LIGHTNING STRIKE A TREE,



AND WHILE HIS CLAN FLED, WITH EARE HANDS HE PLUCKED A LIMB OF FIRE...

TO CARRY IT, SHIELDING IT FROM THE RAIN WITH HIS BODY...

TO HIS CAVE, WHERE HE SHRIEKED OUT A LAUGH, AND GAVE HIS PEOPLE SUMMER,



AND THE GIFT OF FIRE WAS THEIRS.



SO HERE WE ARE AGAIN, TODAY, ON ANOTHER TRAIL, REACHING FOR A HANDFUL OF DIFFERENT FIRE WITH WHICH TO RUN BACK UP COLD SPACE, LIGHTING OUR WAY, AND TAKE TO EARTH A GIFT OF FIRE THAT MIGHT BURN FOREVER. WHY?

HE KNEW THE ANSWER BEFORE THE QUESTION.

BECAUSE OUR KNOWLEDGE IS PITIFUL AND SMALL, AND ONLY THE SUN REALLY KNOWS WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW, AND ONLY THE SUN HAS THE SECRET, AND BESIDES, IT'S FUN. MY GOD, WE'LL SAY, WE DID IT!

THE AUDIO THERMOMETER MUR-
MURED IN THE ARCTIC SILENCE:

TEMPERATURE: TWO
THOUSAND DEGREES!

FALLING LIKE
A SNOWFLAKE INTO
THE LAP OF JUNE, WARM
JULY, AND THE SWELTERING
DOG-MAD DAYS OF
AUGUST.

THREE THOUSAND
DEGREES FAHRENHEIT!

UNDER THE SNOW FIELDS ENGINES
RACED, REFRIGERANTS PUMPED
TEN THOUSAND MILES PER HOUR
IN RIMED BOA-CONSTRUCTOR COILS.

FOUR THOUSAND
DEGREES FAHRENHEIT!

NOON,
SUMMER,
JULY.

FIVE THOUSAND DEGREES FAHRENHEIT!

AND AT LAST THE CAPTAIN SPOKE
WITH ALL THE QUIETNESS OF
THE JOURNEY IN HIS VOICE.

NOW WE ARE
TOUCHING THE SUN.

THEIR EYES THINK-
ING IT, WERE
MELTED GOLD.

SEVEN
THOUSAND
DEGREES.

WHAT
TIME
IS IT
?

EVERYONE HAD TO SMILE, FOR NOW THERE WAS ONLY THE SUN AND THE SUN AND THE SUN. IT WAS EVERY HORIZON, IT WAS EVERY DIRECTION. IT BURNED THE MINUTES, THE SECONDS, THE HOUR GLASSES, THE CLOCKS; IT BURNED ALL TIME AND ETERNITY AWAY.

"AND HERE IS OUR CUP OF ENERGY, FIRE, VIBRATION, CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL, THAT MAY WELL POWER OUR CITIES AND BAKE OUR DAILY BREADS AND SIMMER THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR UNIVERSE FOR A THOUSAND YEARS UNTIL IT IS WELL DONE."

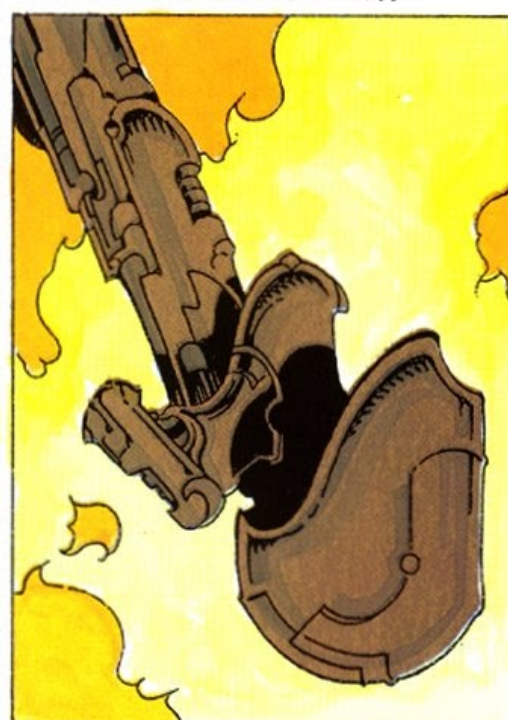


"HERE FROM THIS CUP, ALL GOOD MEN OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION;
DRINK!"

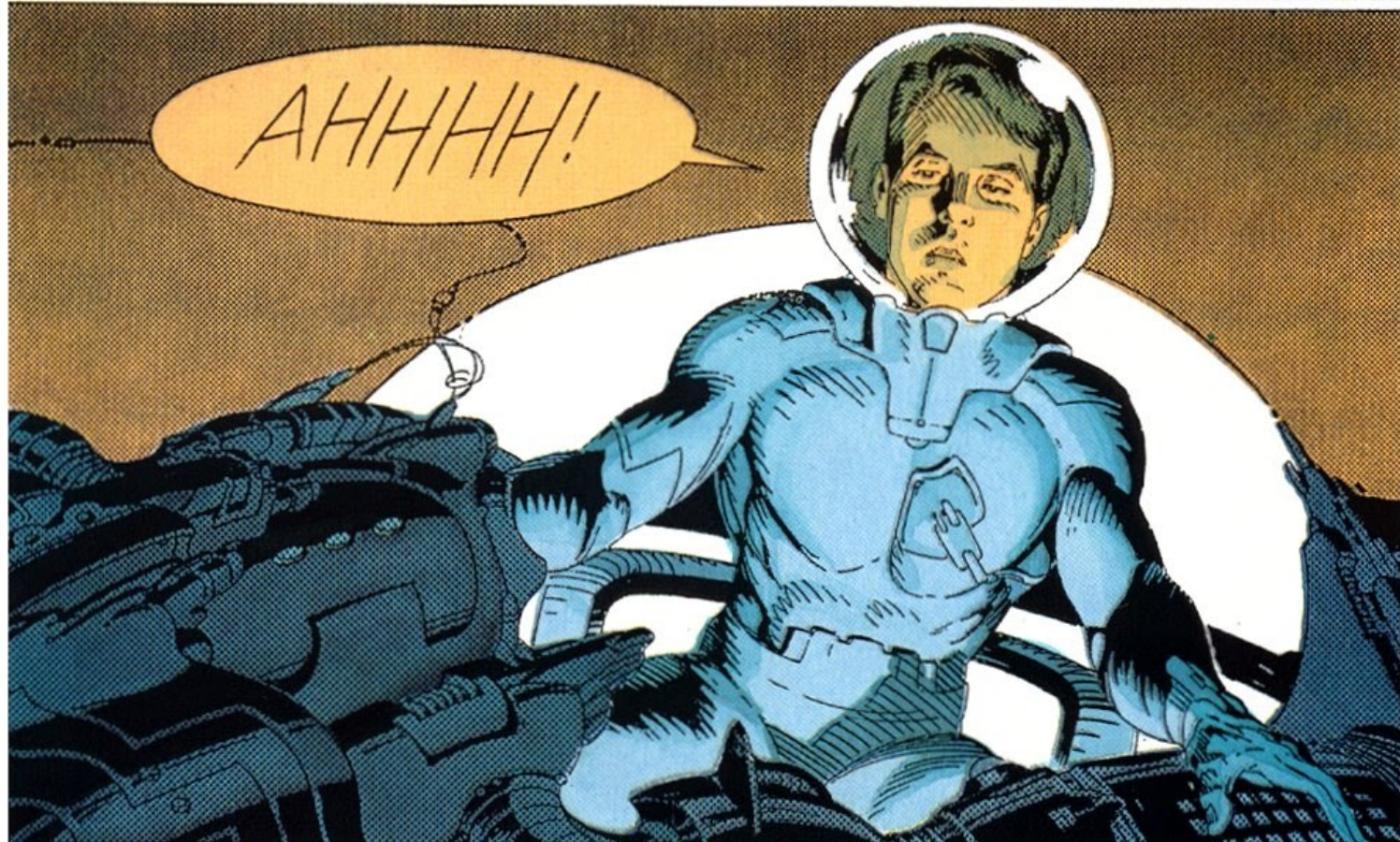
"WARM YOURSELVES AGAINST THE NIGHT OF IGNORANCE, THE LONG SNOWS OF SUPERSTITION, THE COLD WINDS OF DISBELIEF..."

AND FROM THE GREAT FEAR OF DARKNESS IN EACH MAN."

"SO: WE STRETCH OUT OUR HAND WITH THE BEGGER'S CUP..."



AHHHHH!



THE CUP DIPPED INTO THE SUN, IT SCOOPED UP A BIT OF THE FLESH OF GOD, THE BLOOD OF THE UNIVERSE, THE BLAZING THOUGHT, THE BLINDING PHILOSOPHY THAT SET OUT AND MOTHERED A GALAXY, THAT IDLED AND SWEEP PLANETS IN THEIR FIELDS AND SUMMONED OR LAID TO REST LIVES AND LIVLIHOODS.



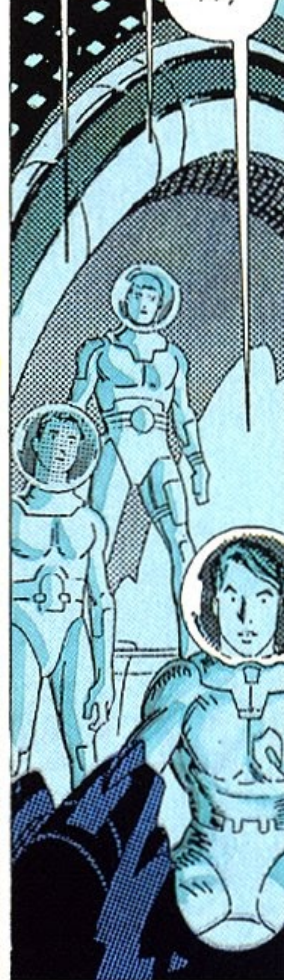
NOW, SLOW,

WHAT'LL
HAPPEN
WHEN WE
PULL IT
INSIDE
? THAT
EXTRA
HEAT
NOW,
AT THIS
TIME,
CAPTAIN
?

GOD
KNOWS,

AUXILIARY
PUMP
ALL RE-
PAIRED,
SIR,

START
IT!



THE PUMP LEAPED ON,

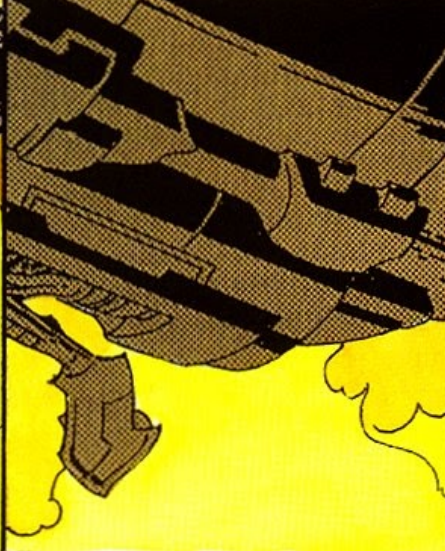
CLOSE THE
LIP OF THE CUP
AND INSIDE NOW,
SLOW, SLOW,



THE BEAUTIFUL HAND
OUTSIDE THE SHIP
TREMBLED, SANK WITH
OILED SILENCE INTO
THE SHIP BODY.

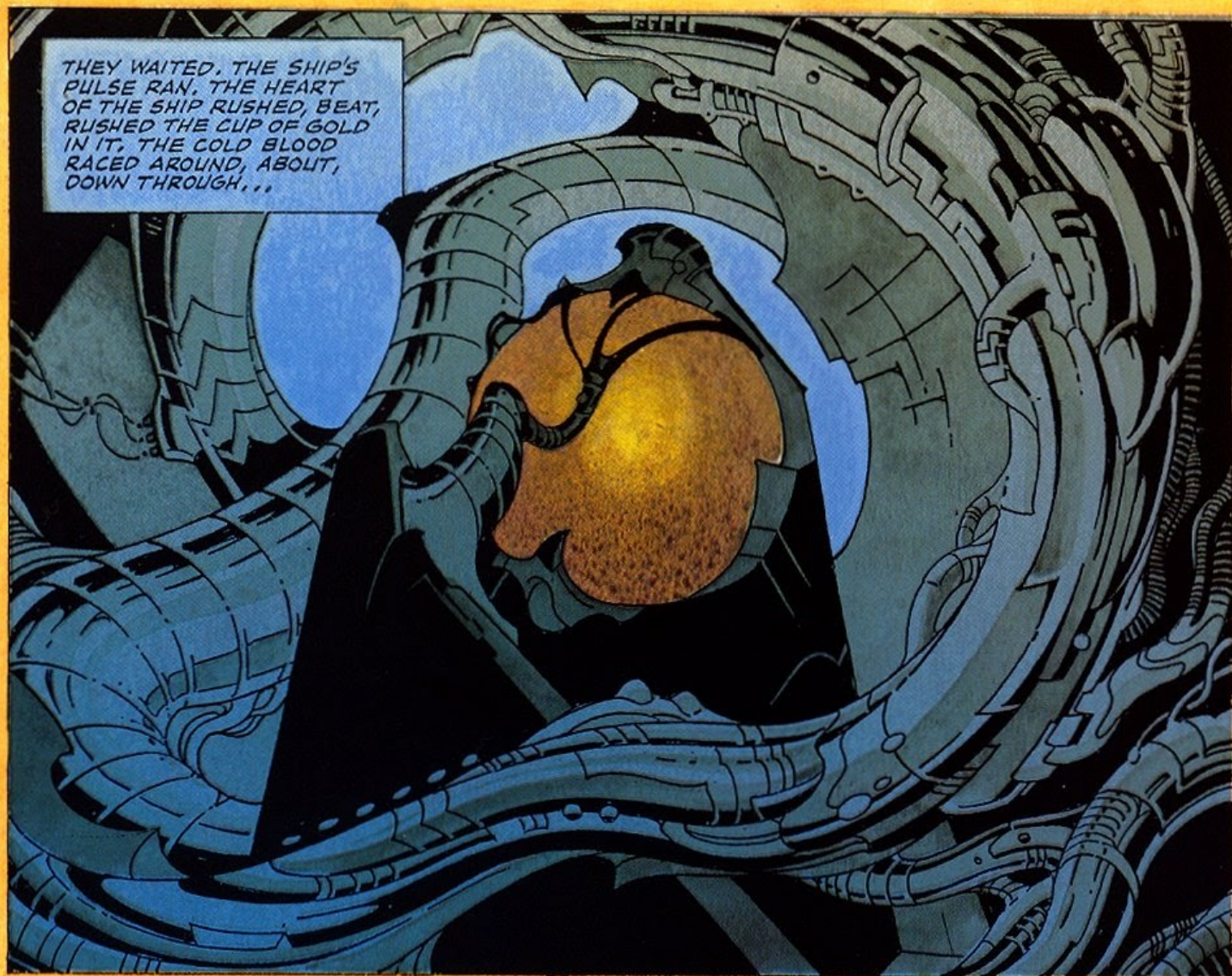
THE CUP, LID SHUT, DRIPPED
YELLOW FLOWERS AND WHITE
STARS, SLID DEEP, THE AUDIO-
THERMOMETER SCREAMED.

THE REFRIGERATOR SYSTEM KICKED; AMMONIATED
FLUIDS BANGED THE WALLS LIKE BLOOD IN THE
HEAD OF A SHRIEKING IDIOT.



HE SHUT THE OUTER AIR-LOCK DOOR.

THEY WAITED. THE SHIP'S
PULSE RAN. THE HEART
OF THE SHIP RUSHED, BEAT,
RUSHED THE CUP OF GOLD
IN IT. THE COLD BLOOD
RACED AROUND, ABOUT,
DOWN THROUGH...



THE ICE STOPPED DRIPPING FROM
THE CEILING. IT FROZE AGAIN.

LET'S GET OUT
OF HERE.

THE SHIP TURNED AND RAN,



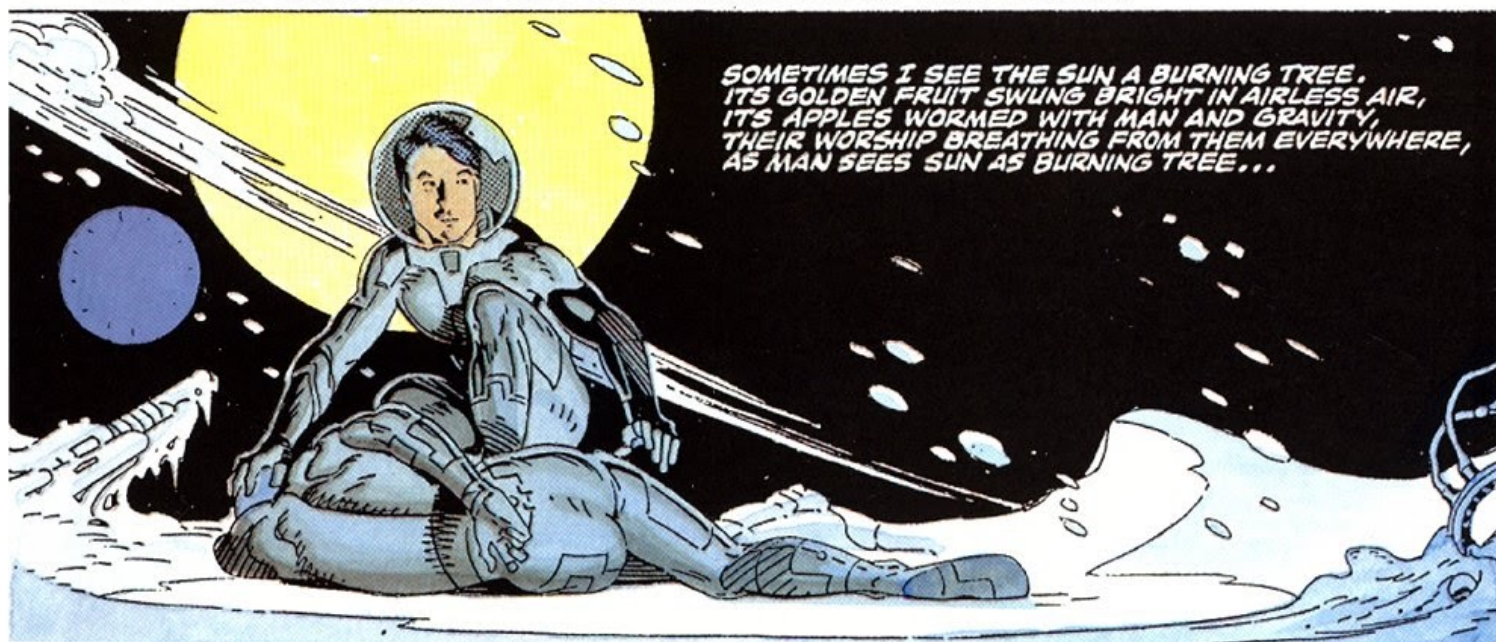
THEY WERE ALL THINKING NOW, TOGETHER:
PULL AWAY AND AWAY FROM THE FIRE AND
THE FLAME, THE HEAT AND THE MELTING.
GO ON OUT NOW TO THE COOL AND THE DARK.

SOON THEY WOULD MOVE IN
NIGHT SO COLD IT MIGHT BE
NECESSARY TO USE THE
SHIP'S NEW FURNACE, DRAW
HEAT FROM THE SHIELDED
FIRE THEY CARRIED NOW
LIKE AN UNBORN CHILD.

THEY WERE
GOING HOME.



THEY WERE GOING HOME AND THERE WAS SOME TIME, AS HE TENDED TO THE BODY OF BRETTON,
FOR THE CAPTAIN TO REMEMBER A POEM HE HAD WRITTEN MANY YEARS BEFORE:

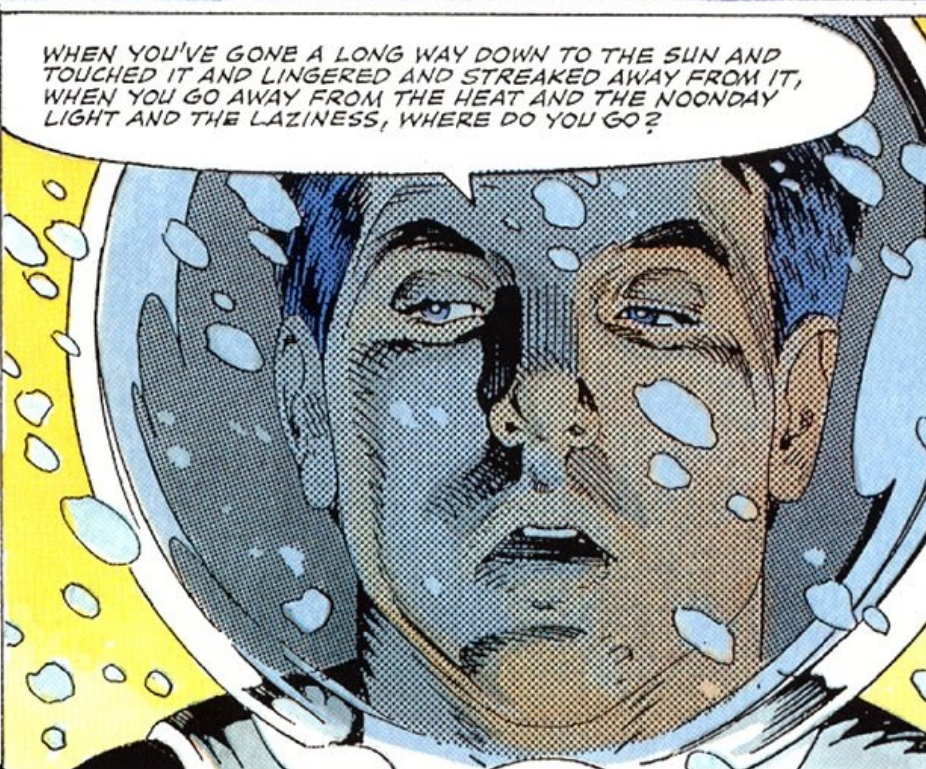
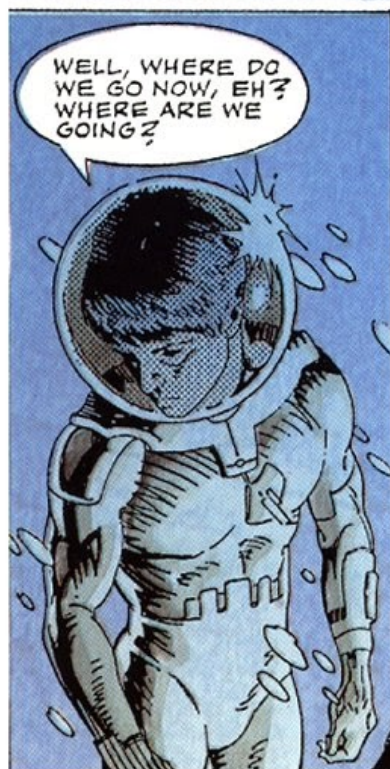


SOMETIMES I SEE THE SUN A BURNING TREE.
ITS GOLDEN FRUIT SWUNG BRIGHT IN AIRLESS AIR,
ITS APPLES WORMED WITH MAN AND GRAVITY,
THEIR WORSHIP BREATHING FROM THEM EVERYWHERE,
AS MAN SEES SUN AS BURNING TREE...

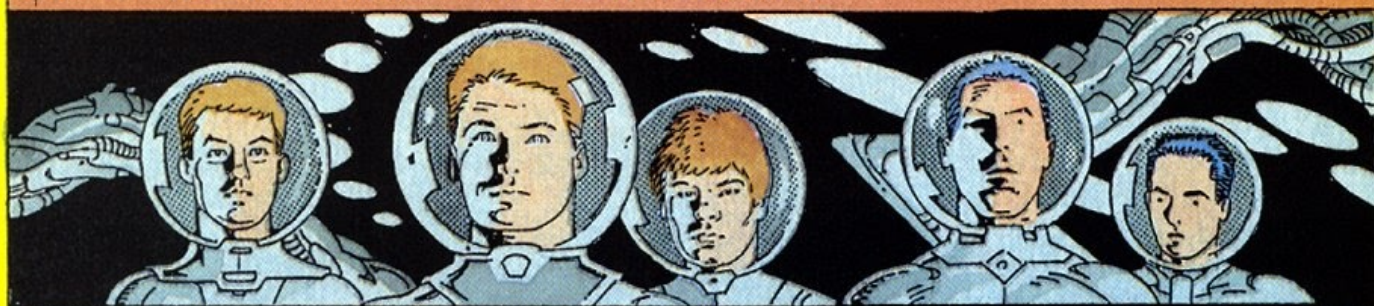
WELL, WHERE DO
WE GO NOW, EH?
WHERE ARE WE
GOING?

HE
FELT
HIS
MEN
SITTING
OR
STANDING
ALL
ABOUT
HIM,
THE
TERROR
DEAD
IN
THEM,
THEIR
BREATHING
QUIET.

WHEN YOU'VE GONE A LONG WAY DOWN TO THE SUN AND
TOUCHED IT AND LINGERED AND STREAKED AWAY FROM IT,
WHEN YOU GO AWAY FROM THE HEAT AND THE NOONDAY
LIGHT AND THE LAZINESS, WHERE DO YOU GO?



HIS MEN WAITED FOR HIM TO SAY IT OUT, THEY WAITED FOR HIM TO GATHER ALL OF THE COOLNESS AND THE WHITENESS OF THE WORD IN HIS MIND, AND THEY SAW HIM SETTLE THE WORD, LIKE A BIT OF ICE CREAM, IN HIS MOUTH, ROLLING IT GENTLY,

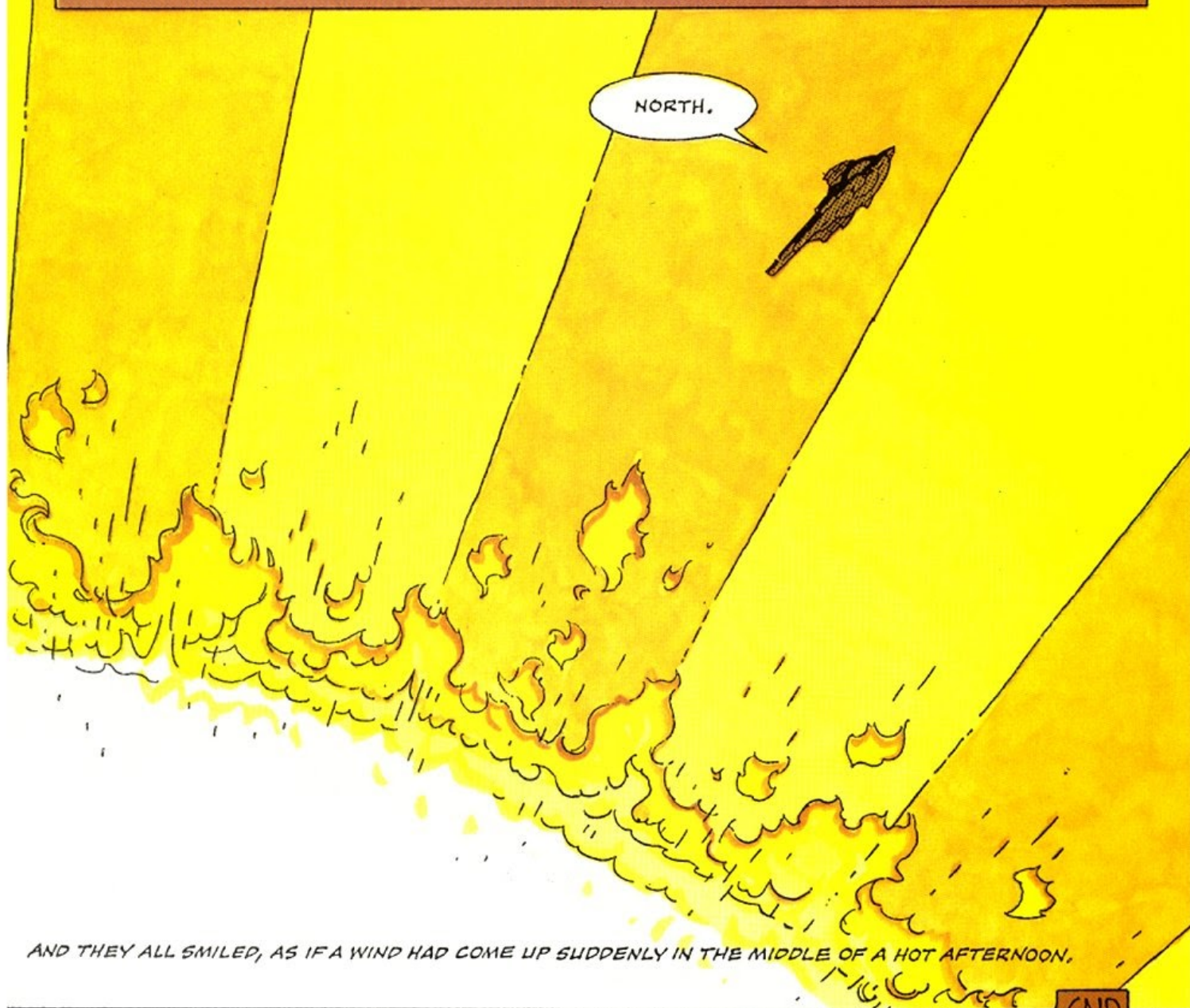


THERE'S ONLY ONE
DIRECTION IN SPACE
FROM HERE ON OUT,



THEY WAITED, THEY WAITED AS THE SHIP MOVED SWIFTLY INTO COLD DARKNESS
AWAY FROM THE LIGHT, "NORTH," MURMURED THE CAPTAIN,...

NORTH.



AND THEY ALL SMILED, AS IF A WIND HAD COME UP SUDDENLY IN THE MIDDLE OF A HOT AFTERNOON,

END

MARIONETTES, INC.

Adapted by Ralph Reese

MARIONETTES, INC. was the result of a series of experiments with robots that I engaged in some 40 years ago. I decided to put men, women and robots in various situations, to see what might happen. Here's one example.

RAY

MARIONETTES, INC.

THEY WALKED SLOWLY DOWN THE STREET AT ABOUT TEN IN THE EVENING, TALKING CALMLY. THEY WERE BOTH ABOUT THIRTY FIVE, SOLID CITIZENS ...

YOUR FIRST NIGHT OUT IN **YEARS** AND YOU GO **HOME** AT TEN O'CLOCK!

MUSTN'T CROWD MY LUCK...

WHAT DID YOU DO, PUT **SLEEPING POWDER** IN YOUR WIFE'S **COFFEE**?

NO... YOU'LL SEE SOON ENOUGH.

THEY TURNED A CORNER ...

HONESTLY, BRALING, I HATE TO SAY THIS, BUT MARRIAGE HAS BEEN PRETTY AWFUL FOR YOU, HASN'T IT?

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT...

IT GOT AROUND... HOW SHE GOT YOU TO MARRY HER, THAT TIME BACK IN 1990, WHEN YOU WERE GOING TO GO TO RIO ...

DEAR RIO... I NEVER **DID** GET TO SEE IT AFTER ALL MY PLANS!...

...HOW SHE **TORE HER CLOTHES** AND **RUMPLED HER HAIR** AND THREATENED TO **CALL THE POLICE** UNLESS YOU **MARRIED HER!**

I TOLD HER I DIDN'T LOVE HER...

Adapted by Ralph Reese

"...BUT YOU MARRIED HER ANYWAY, AND IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS."

YES, BUT I THINK THINGS ARE ABOUT TO CHANGE... LOOK HERE!

IT'S A TICKET TO RIO ON THE THURSDAY FLIGHT!

YES, I'M FINALLY GOING TO MAKE IT!

...BUT WON'T THE WIFE OBJECT?!

SHE'LL NEVER KNOW I'M GONE

SMITH SIGHED...

I WISH I WAS GOING WITH YOU!

POOR SMITH... YOUR MARRIAGE HASN'T EXACTLY BEEN A BED OF ROSES, HAS IT?!

NOT EXACTLY.

I MEAN, WHEN YOU'VE BEEN MARRIED TEN YEARS, YOU DON'T EXPECT A WOMAN TO SIT ON YOUR LAP FOR TWO HOURS EVERY EVENING AND CALL YOU AT WORK THREE TIMES A DAY TO TALK **BABY TALK!**

WELL, HERE'S MY HOUSE... NOW, WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MY **SECRET?** HOW I MADE IT **OUT** THIS EVENING?

THEY BOTH STARED UP THROUGH THE DARK...

LOOK UP THERE!

IN A WINDOW ABOVE THEM ON THE SECOND FLOOR, A **SHADE** WAS RAISED. A MAN ABOUT **35 YEARS OLD**, WITH **SAD GRAY EYES** AND A **THIN MUSTACHE** LOOKED DOWN...

...AND IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IN THE LAST MONTH SHE'S GOTTEN **WORSE!** SOMETIMES, I WONDER IF SHE ISN'T A LITTLE **SIMPLE-MINDED.**

WILL YOU REALLY TELL?

WHY, THAT'S YOU!

SSH... NOT SO LOUD!

THE MAN IN THE WINDOW GESTURED SIGNIFICANTLY, THEN VANISHED...

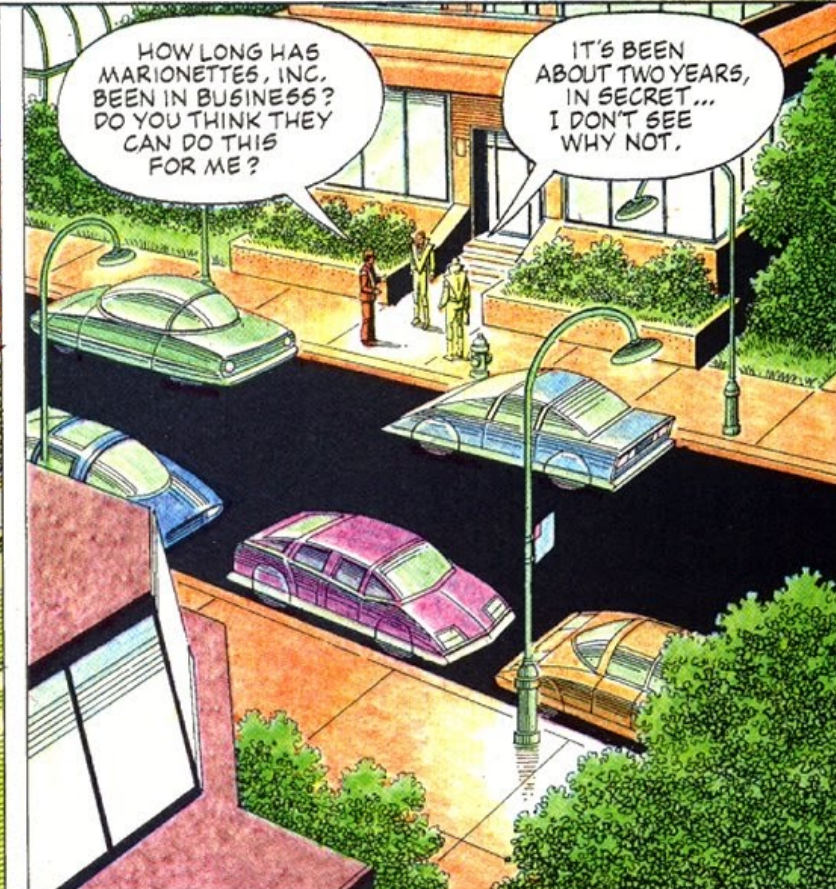
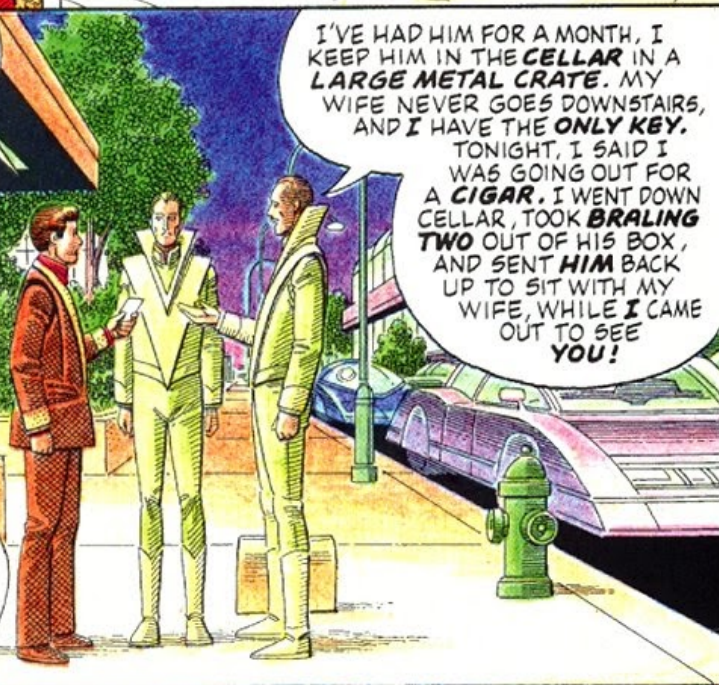
THEY WAITED A MOMENT... THE STREET DOOR TO THE HOUSE OPENED, AND THE TALL, SPARE GENTLEMAN WITH THE MUSTACHE CAME OUT TO MEET THEM...

HELLO, BRALING.

HELLO, BRALING.



SMITH STAGGERED BACK, **APPALLED**... HE REACHED OUT AND TOUCHED THE WARM HANDS AND CHEEKS OF THE THING...





THANK YOU, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS... JUST A LITTLE **RESPITE**, A NIGHT OR SO, ONCE A MONTH, EVEN, MY WIFE LOVES ME **SO MUCH**, SHE CAN'T STAND TO HAVE ME **GONE** FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR!

AT LEAST SHE LOVES YOU...

I JUST WANT HER TO RELAX HER GRIP A LITTLE BIT!

ON THE CROSSTOWN BUS SMITH WHISTLED SOFTLY, TURNING THE WHITE CARD IN HIS FINGERS...

"CLIENTS MUST BE PLEDGED TO **SECRECY**, FOR WHILE AN ACT IS PENDING IN CONGRESS TO **LEGALIZE MARIONETTES, INC.**, IT IS STILL A **FELONY**, IF CAUGHT, TO **USE ONE**."

"CLIENTS MUST HAVE A **MOLD** MADE OF THEIR BODY, AND A **COLOR INDEX** OF THEIR EYES, HAIR, SKIN, ETC. CLIENTS MUST EXPECT TO WAIT **TWO MONTHS** UNTIL THEIR MODEL IS FINISHED. OUR MOTTO IS **"NO STRINGS ATTACHED."**

THE BUS PULLED TO HIS STOP. HE GOT OUT AND CLIMBED THE STEPS TO HIS APARTMENT, HUMMING SOFTLY TO HIMSELF...

HE MOVED OUT INTO THE HALL AND THROUGH THE DARK ROOMS TO THE LIBRARY, HUMMING. HE OPENED THE DESK AND FILCHED THE **BANKBOOK**...

HE RECHECKED THE BANKBOOK FRANTICALLY...

NETTIE AND I HAVE **FIFTEEN THOUSAND** IN OUR JOINT BANK ACCOUNT... I'LL JUST SLIP **EIGHT THOUSAND** OUT AS A **BUSINESS VENTURE**, YOU MIGHT SAY...

...JUST TAKE **EIGHT THOUSAND**, IS ALL... HEY! WAIT A MINUTE!

TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS IS MISSING! WHAT'S SHE **DONE** WITH IT?! MORE **HATS**? MORE **CLOTHES**? MORE **PERFUME**?!

HE STORMED INTO THE BEDROOM, RIGHTEOUS AND INDIGNANT... WHAT DID SHE **MEAN**... TAKING THEIR **MONEY** LIKE THIS?! HE BENT **OVER HER**, BUT SHE DID NOT STIR...

HIS HEART THROBBED VIOLENTLY, HIS TONGUE DRIED, HIS **KNEES** SUDDENLY TURNED TO **WATER**... HE PRESSED HIS **EAR** TO HER ROUND, PINK **BOSOM**...

NETTIE!
NETTIE WAKE UP!

WHAT HAVE YOU **DONE** WITH MY **MONEY**?!

NETTIE!

THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT HER...

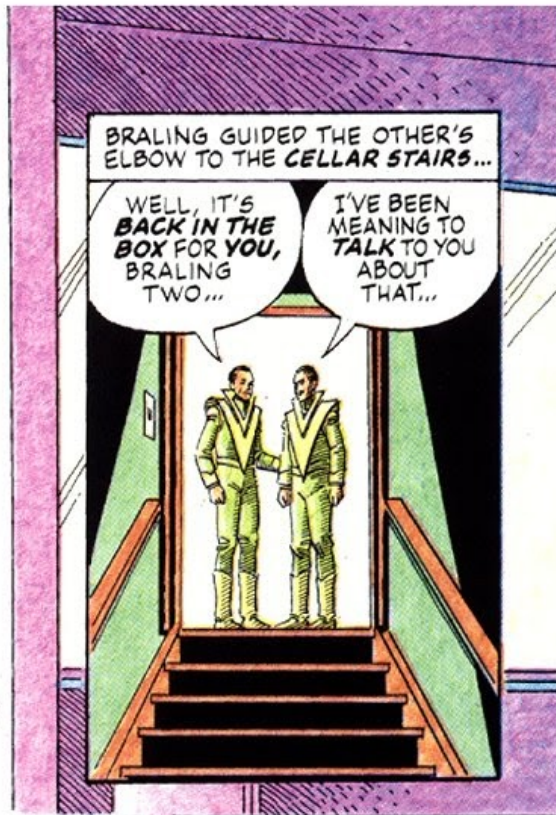
TICK!
TICK!
TICK!
TICK!
TICK!



AS SMITH WAS WALKING INTO THE NIGHT, BRALING AND BRALING TWO TURNED INTO THE HOUSE...

I'M GLAD HE'LL BE HAPPY, TOO!

HMM...



BRALING GUIDED THE OTHER'S ELBOW TO THE **CELLAR STAIRS**...

WELL, IT'S **BACK IN THE BOX** FOR YOU, BRALING TWO...

I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THAT...

THEY REACHED THE CONCRETE FLOOR AND WALKED ACROSS IT...



THE CELLAR... I DON'T LIKE IT, I DON'T LIKE THAT **BOX**...

I'LL TRY TO FIX UP SOMETHING MORE COMFORTABLE...



MARIONETTES ARE MADE TO **MOVE**, NOT LIE STILL... HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIE IN A **BOX** MOST OF THE TIME?... I KEEP **RUNNING**... THERE'S NO WAY TO SHUT ME OFF! I'M PERFECTLY **ALIVE** AND I HAVE **FEELINGS**!

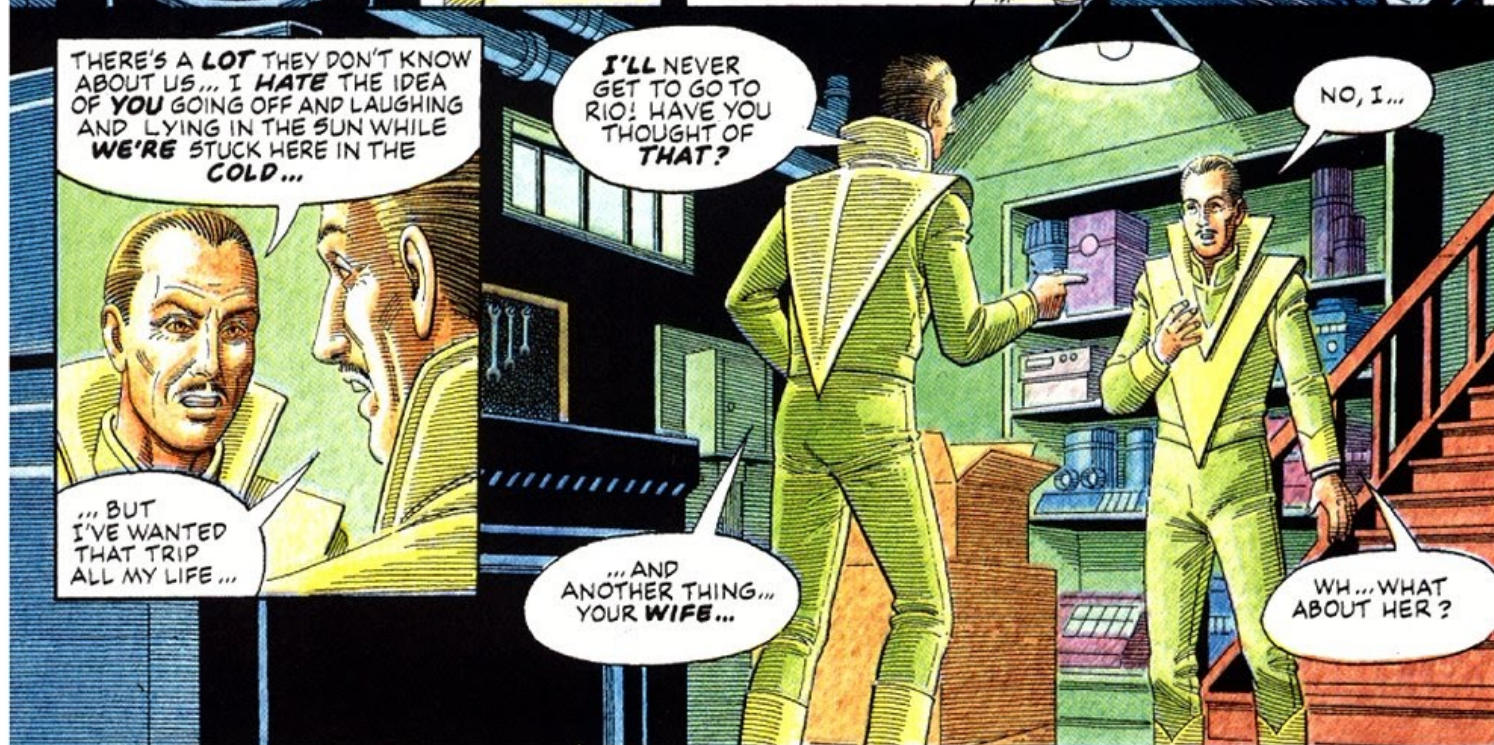
IT WILL ONLY BE A FEW DAYS NOW... I'LL BE OFF TO **RIO**, AND YOU CAN LIVE **UPSTAIRS**!

BRALING TWO GESTURED IRRITABLY...



...AND WHEN YOU GET BACK FROM HAVING A GOOD TIME IN **RIO**, **BACK IN THE BOX** I GO!

THEY DIDN'T TELL ME AT THE **SHOP** I'D GET SUCH A **DIFFICULT SPECIMEN**!



THERE'S A **LOT** THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT US... I **HATE** THE IDEA OF YOU GOING OFF AND LAUGHING AND LYING IN THE SUN WHILE WE'RE STUCK HERE IN THE **COLD**...

I'LL NEVER GET TO GO TO **RIO**! HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF THAT?

NO, I...

...BUT I'VE WANTED THAT TRIP ALL MY LIFE...

...AND ANOTHER THING... YOUR **WIFE**...

WH...WHAT ABOUT HER?

BRALING LICKED HIS LIPS NERVOUSLY AND BEGAN TO EDGE TOWARD THE **DOOR**...



BRALING TOOK ANOTHER STEP AND THEN **FROZE**...



...AND I'VE BEEN THINKING HOW **NICE** IT IS IN RIO, AND HOW **I'LL** NEVER GET THERE, AND I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR **WIFE** AND... I THINK WE COULD BE **VERY** HAPPY.

TH...THAT'S **NICE**...



BRALING MOVED CLOSER TO THE STAIRS, SPEAKING AS **CASUAL** AS HE COULD...



HE TRIED TO RUSH FOR THE **DOOR**... A **METAL-FIRM GRIP** SEIZED HIS WRIST...



HE SCREAMED. A HAND CLAMPED OVER HIS MOUTH...



TEN MINUTES LATER, MRS. BRALING **AWOKE**. SHE PUT HER HAND TO HER CHEEK... SOMEONE HAD JUST **KISSED** HER...



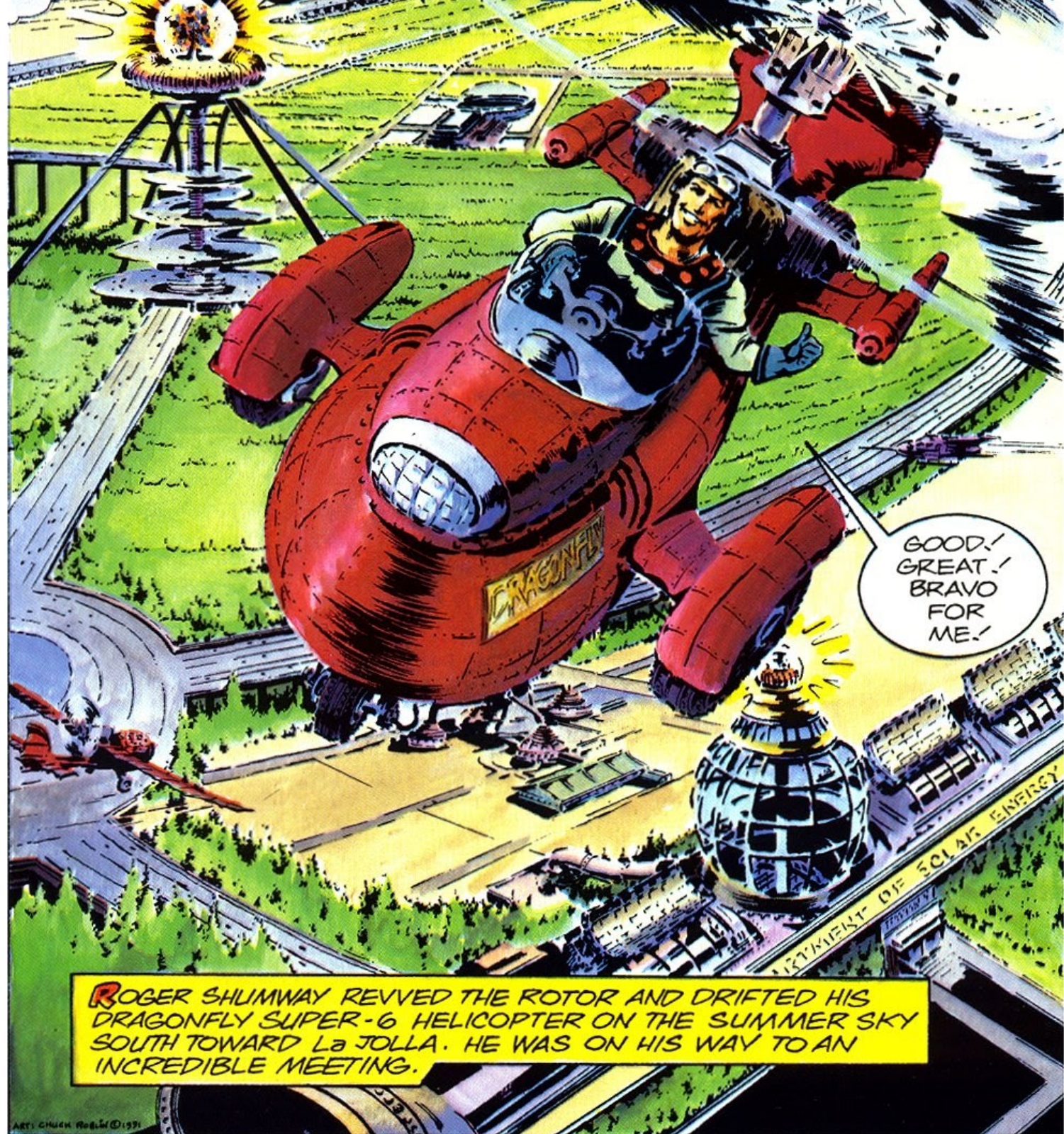
THE TOYNBEE CONVECTOR

Adapted by Ray Zone
Illustrated by Chuck Roblin
Colored by Sam Parsons

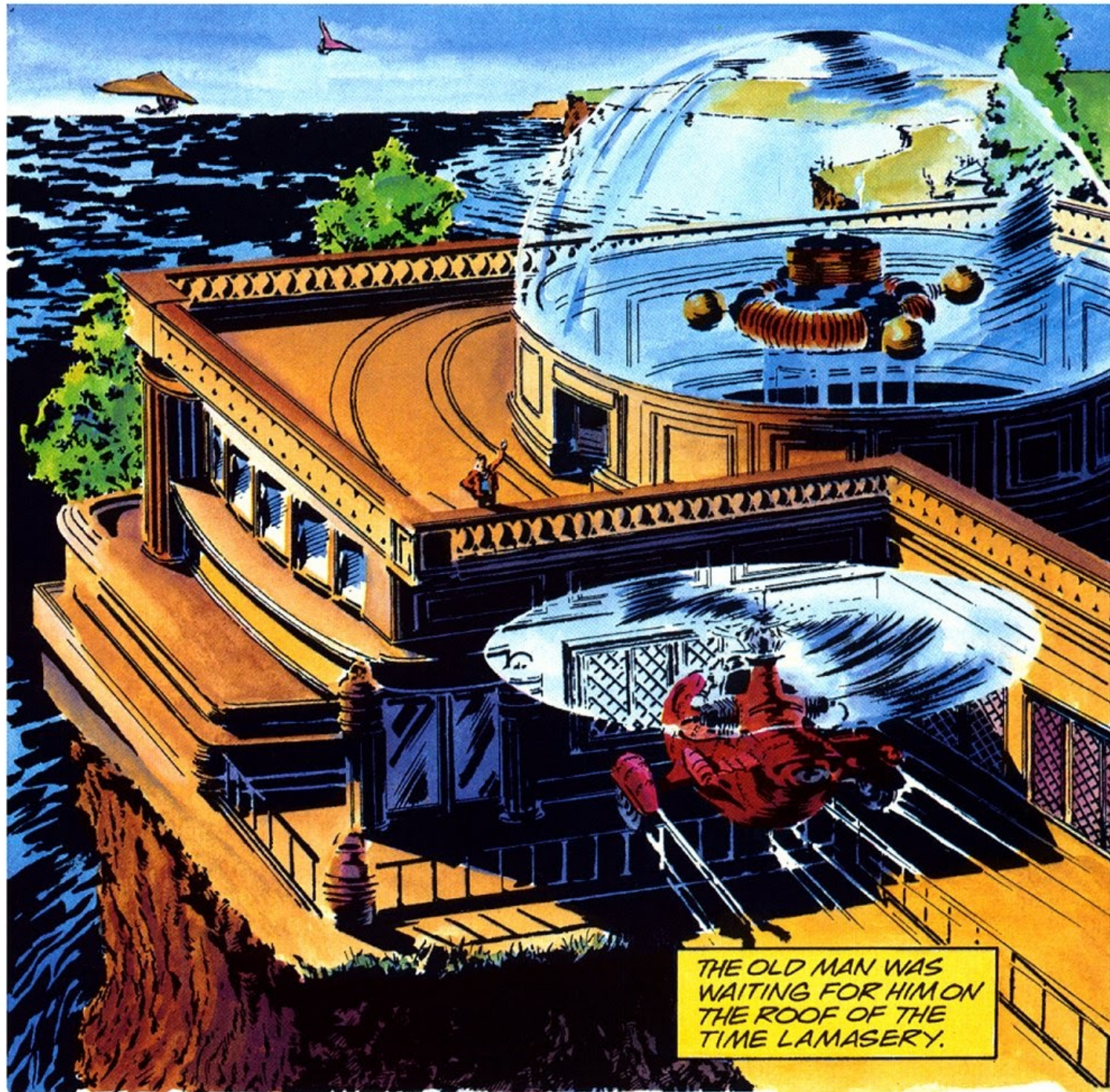
THE TOYNBEE CONVECTOR was written, as will be obvious in the viewing, to challenge the all-too-popular notions of Doomsday and End of the World that often surround us in the midst of freedom and plenty. I hate pessimists for when asked for proofs, they deliver much less than a lot. I am not an optimist. I am an optimat behaviorist, which means every day I write and create and in creating, help to change the world, I hope, for the better.

RAY

THE TOYNBEE CONVECTOR



ROGER SHUMWAY REVVED THE ROTOR AND DRIFTED HIS DRAGONFLY SUPER-6 HELICOPTER ON THE SUMMER SKY SOUTH TOWARD La JOLLA. HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO AN INCREDIBLE MEETING.



THE OLD MAN WAS
WAITING FOR HIM ON
THE ROOF OF THE
TIME LAMASERY.



I CAN'T
BELIEVE
I'M
HERE.

YOU ARE,
AND NONE
TOO SOON!

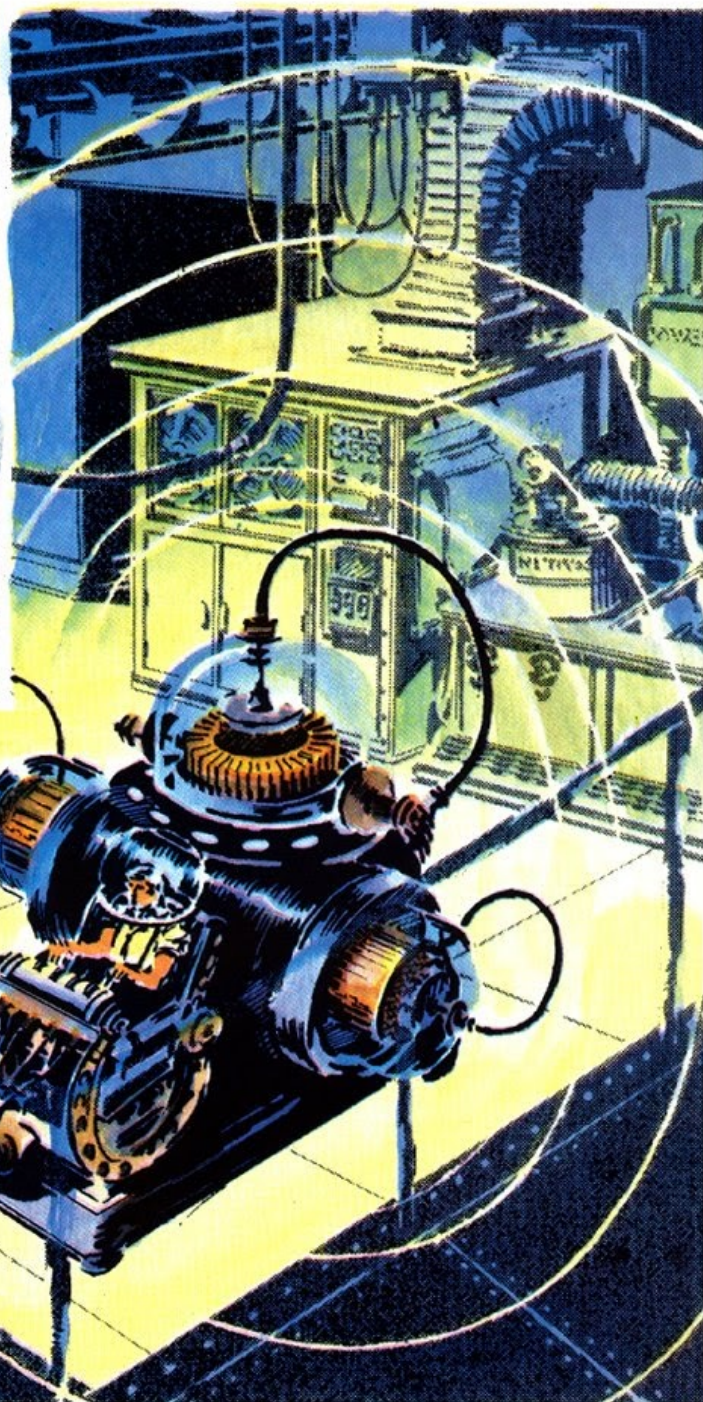
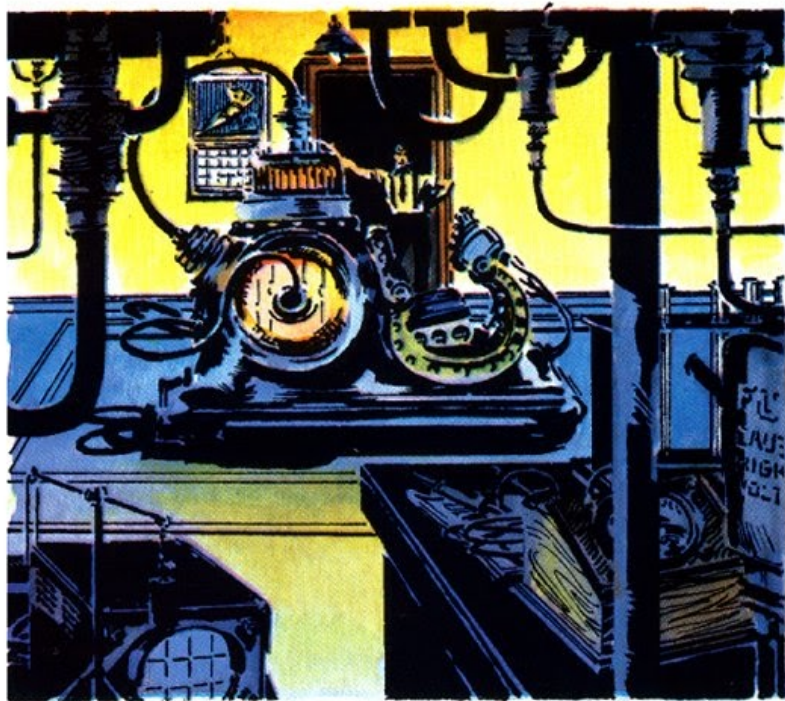
CRAIG BENNET STILES, FOR ALL
HIS 130 YEARS WAS NOT OLD.
HIS BRIGHT FACE WAS A
SUNBURST CELEBRATING
ITS OWN BIRTHDAY.





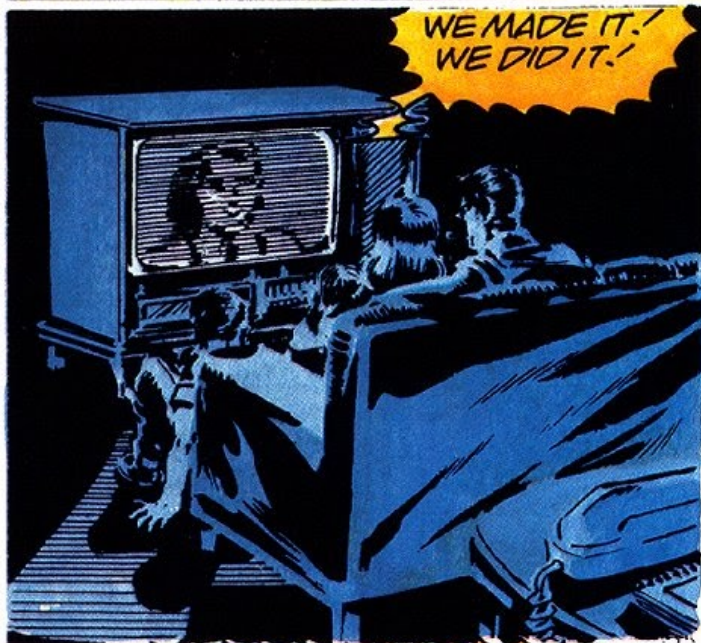


"ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO YOU VANISHED FROM THE PRESENT. YOU ARE THE ONLY MAN IN HISTORY TO TRAVEL IN TIME."

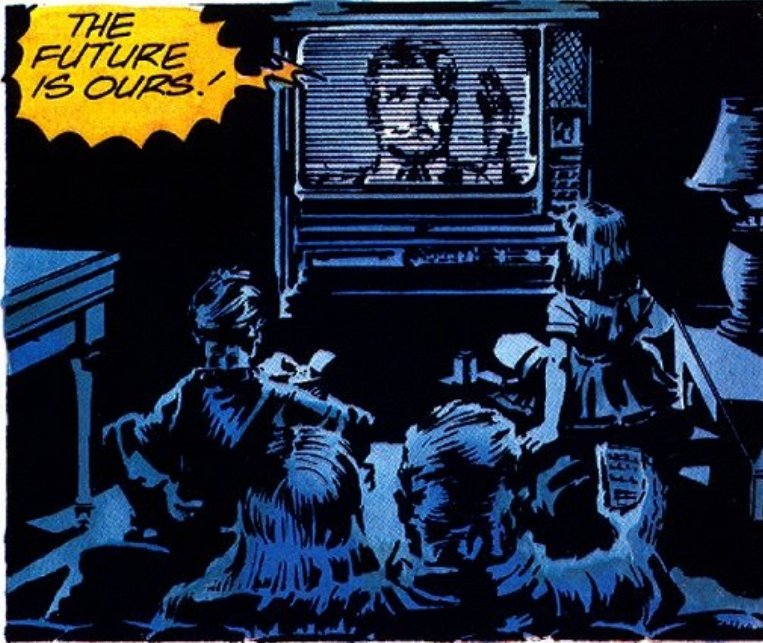


"YOU REPORTED BY SATELLITE FEED AROUND THE WORLD TO BILLIONS OF VIEWERS AND TOLD THEM THEIR FUTURE."

WE MADE IT!
WE DID IT!



THE
FUTURE
IS OURS!



WE REBUILT THE CITIES.



WE STOPPED THE WARS.



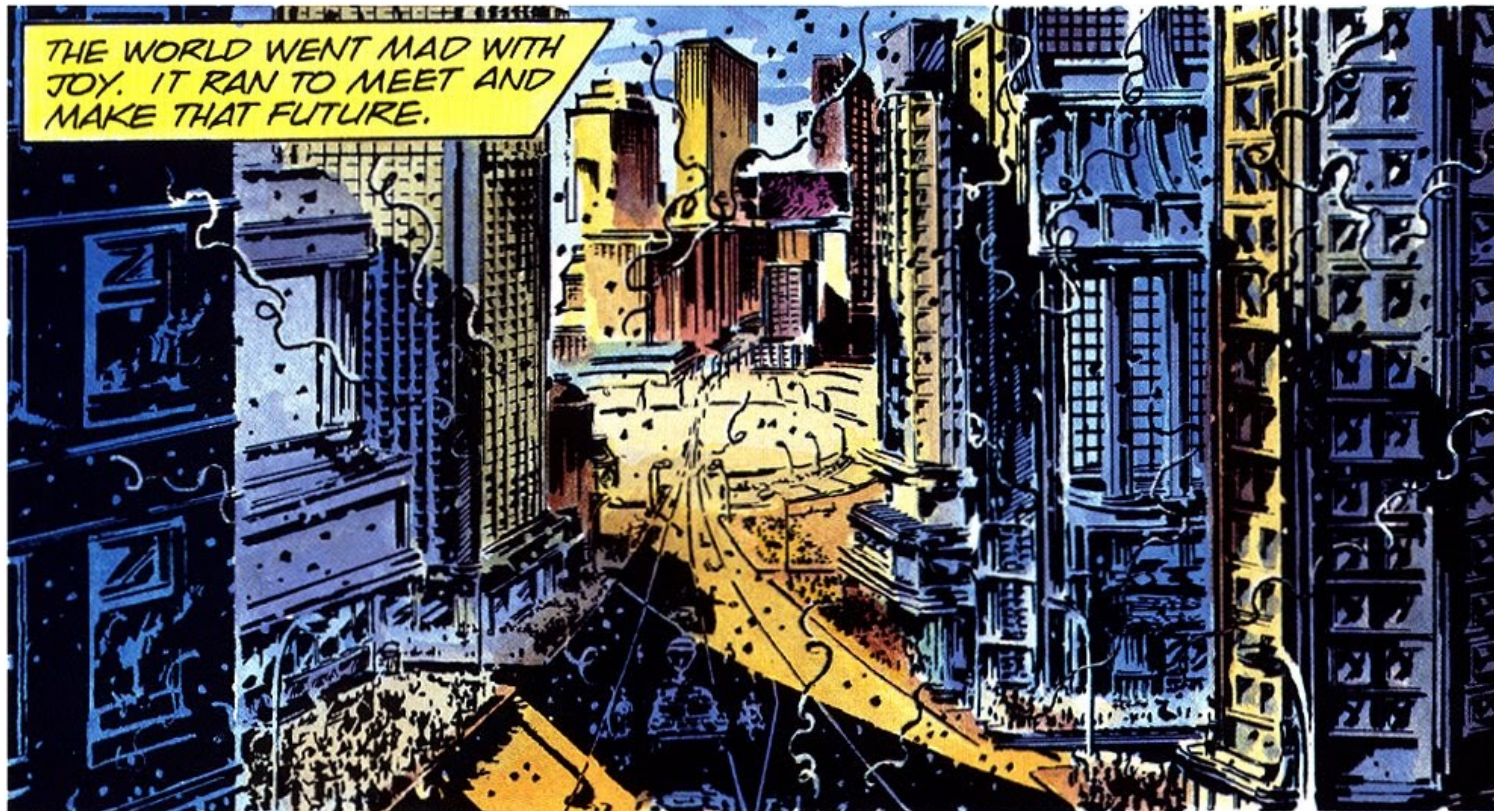
WE COLONIZED THE MOON, MOVED
ON TO MARS, THEN ALPHA CENTAURI.



WE CURED CANCER AND
STOPPED DEATH.



THE WORLD WENT MAD WITH JOY. IT RAN TO MEET AND MAKE THAT FUTURE.



NOW THE TIME MACHINE IS ON EXHIBIT. DIGNITARIES WILL BE ARRIVING HERE SOON FROM EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD.



AT FOUR O'CLOCK TODAY YOUR YOUNGER SELF IS DUE TO ARRIVE FROM THE PAST.



"FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, YOU WILL APPEAR IN TWO PLACES."



WHEN YOU WENT AHEAD IN TIME, DID NO ONE SEE YOU ARRIVE?



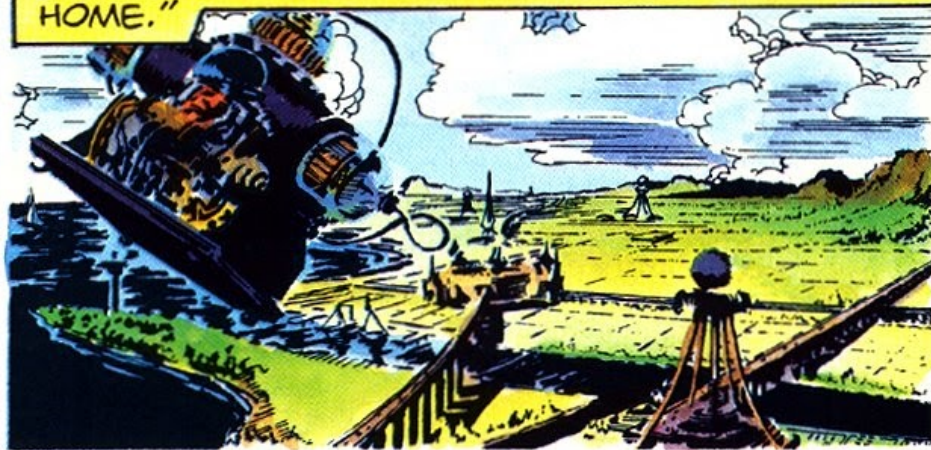
DID ANY-ONE AT ALL HAPPEN TO LOOK UP AND SEE YOUR DEVICE HOVER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AIR, HERE, OVER CHICAGO, NEW YORK, AND PARIS? NO ONE?



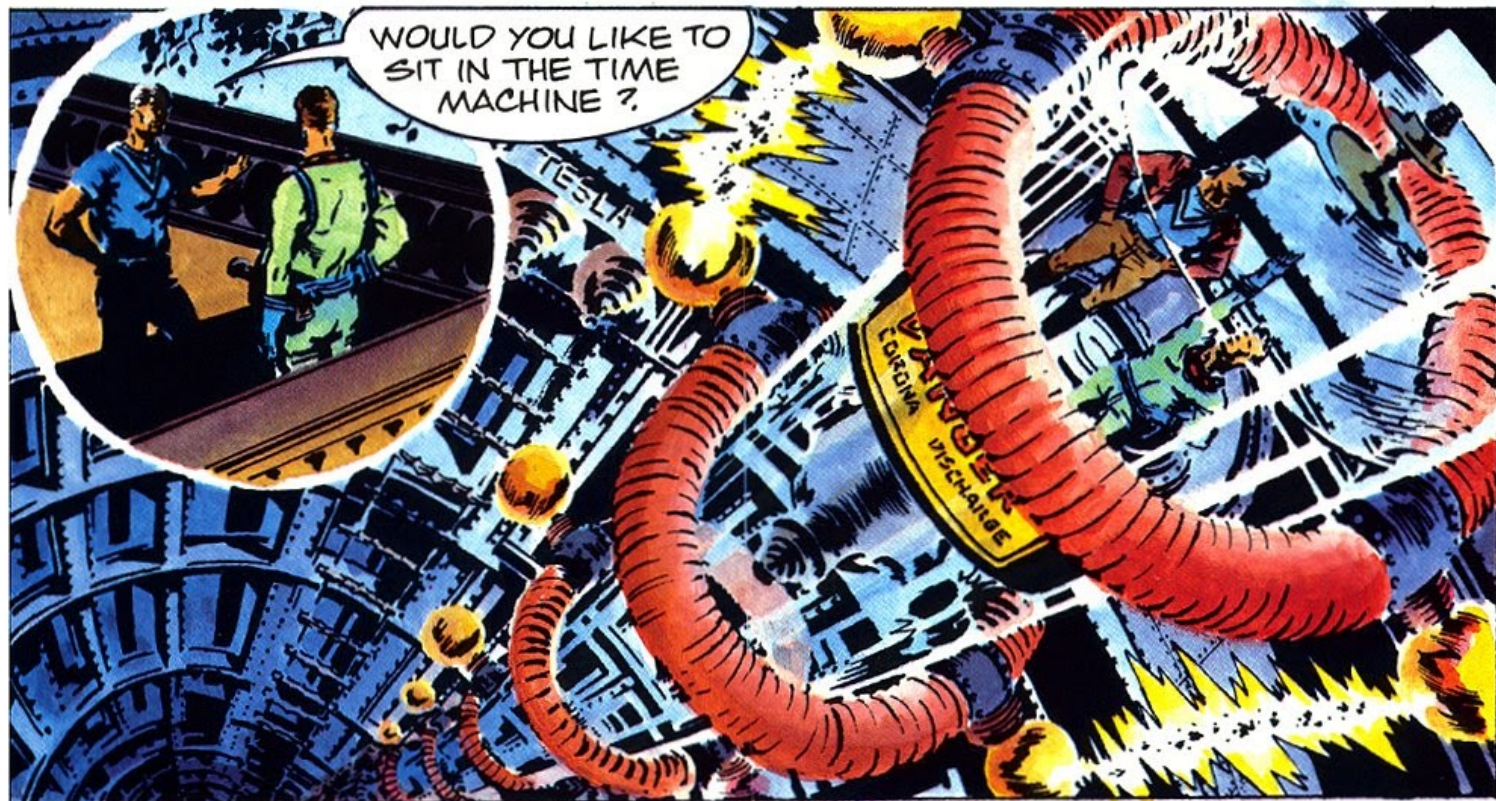


I
DON'T SUPPOSE
ANYONE WAS
EXPECTING ME. I
WAS CAREFUL NOT
TO LINGER TOO LONG.

"I NEEDED ONLY TIME TO PHOTOGRAPH THE
REBUILT CITIES, THE CLEAN SEAS AND RIVERS,
THE FRESH, SMOG FREE AIR, THE UNFORTI-
FIED NATIONS, THE SAVED AND BELOVED
WHALES. I MOVED QUICKLY, PHOTOGRAPHED
SWIFTLY AND RAN BACK DOWN THE YEARS
HOME."



WOULD YOU LIKE TO
SIT IN THE TIME
MACHINE?

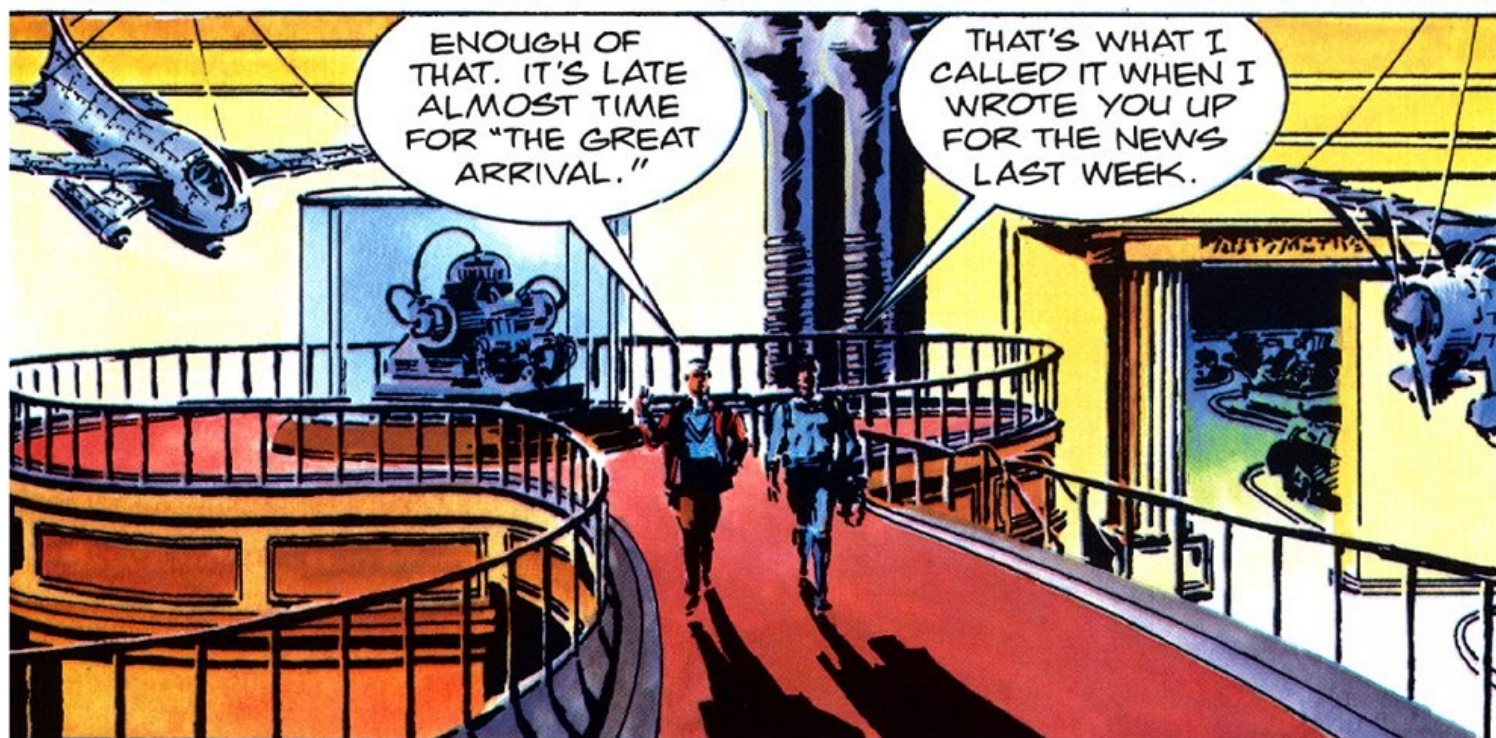
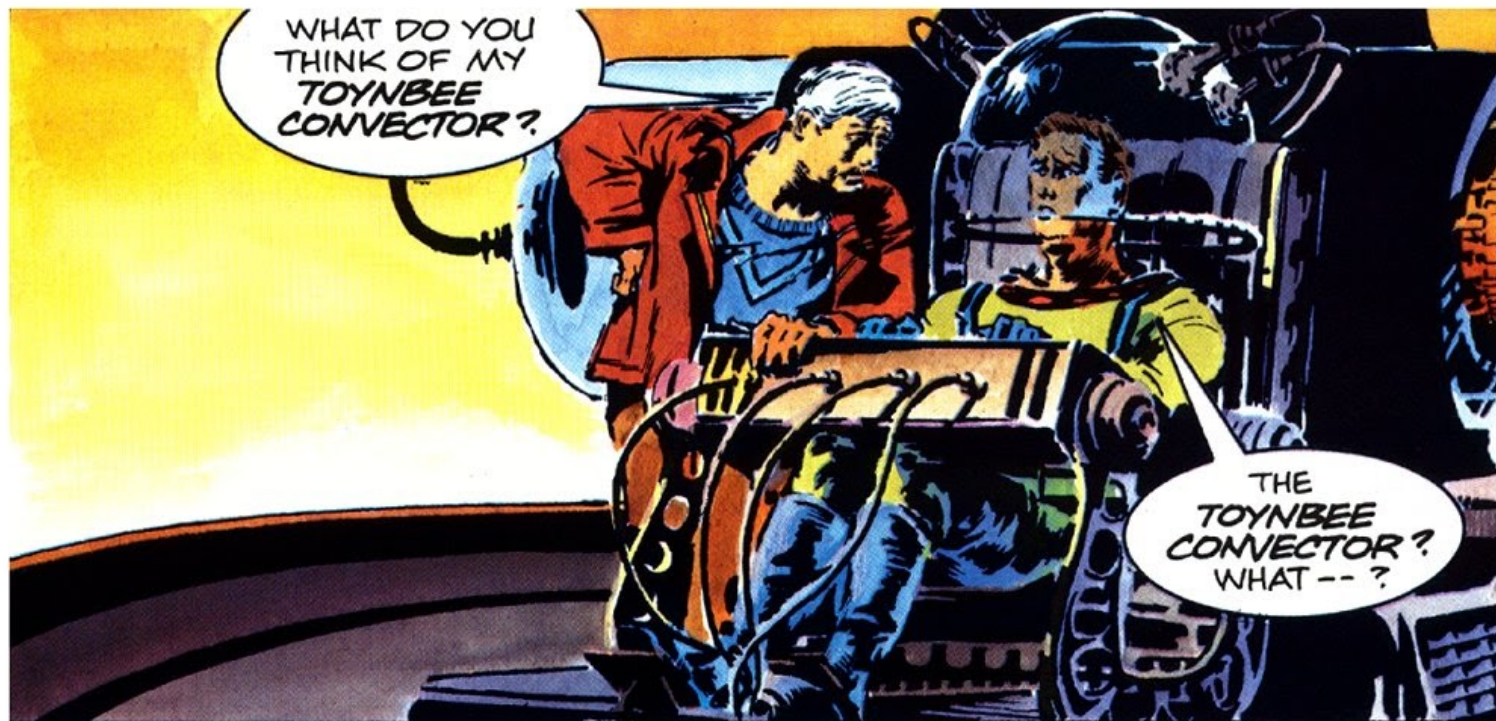


THERE.
GO.
SIT.



DON'T BE AFRAID.
I WON'T SEND
YOU ON A
JOURNEY.

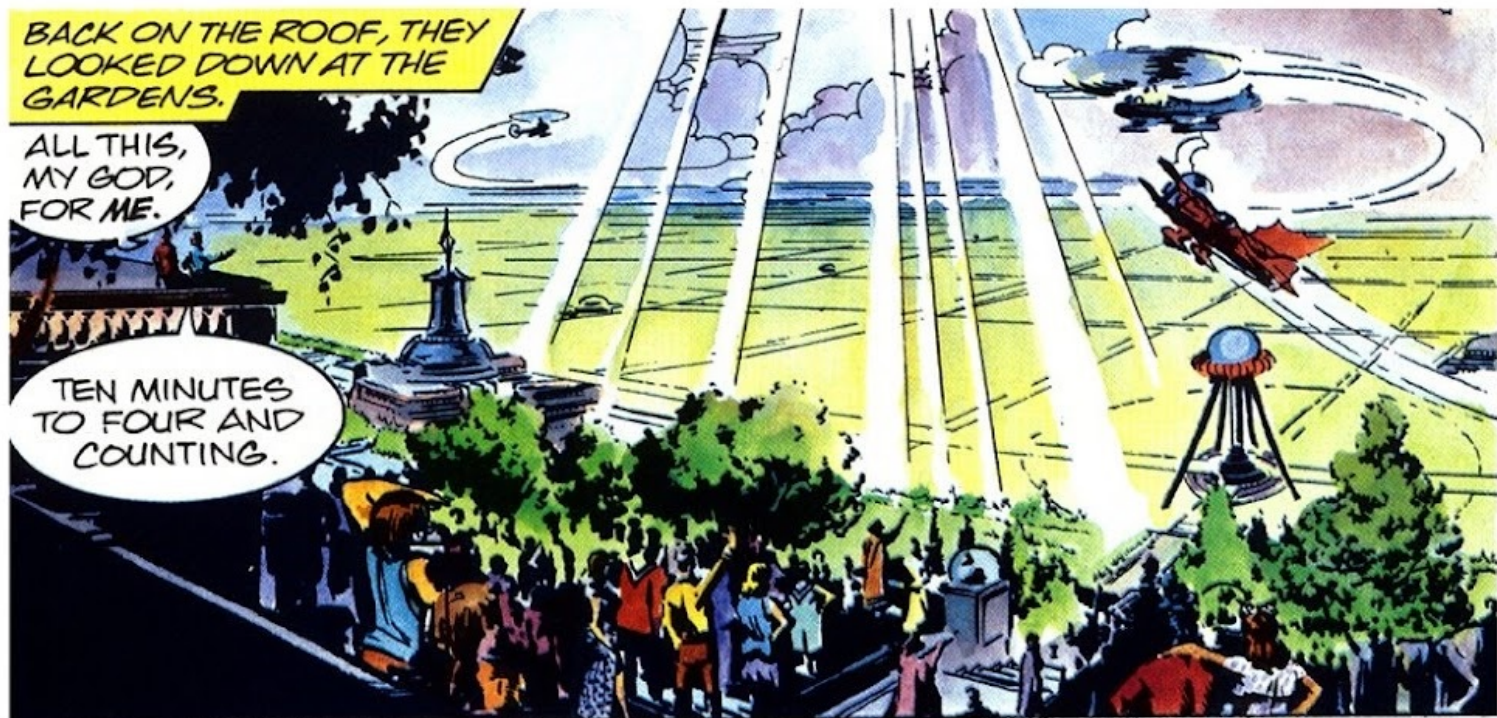
I
WOULDN'T
MIND.



BACK ON THE ROOF, THEY
LOOKED DOWN AT THE
GARDENS.

ALL THIS,
MY GOD,
FOR ME.

TEN MINUTES
TO FOUR AND
COUNTING.



OUR OWN PRIVATE TOAST AND OUR
OWN PRIVATE CELEBRATION. WHAT
TIME DO YOU HAVE?



ONE
MINUTE
AND
COUNTING.



"NINE."



"EIGHT."

"SEVEN..."

"SIX, FIVE..."







NO.!



Oh, BUT YES. I NEVER WENT ANYWHERE. I STAYED, BUT MADE IT SEEM I WENT.



BUT WHY? WHY?

TURN ON THE TAPE RECORDING BUTTON ON YOUR LAPEL. I WANT EVERYONE TO HEAR THIS.



"I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN A TIME WHEN PEOPLE HAD STOPPED BELIEVING IN THEMSELVES.



"EVERYWHERE, I SAW AND HEARD DOUBT. EVERYWHERE WAS PROFESSIONAL DESPAIR.

"YOU NAME IT, WE HAD IT.
THE WORLD WAS A
CESSPOOL."



"NOTHING WAS WORTH DOING. GO TO
BED AT NIGHT WITH BAD NEWS. WAKE
UP IN THE MORN TO WORSE NEWS. Ah!"



WAS THAT
HOW IT WAS ?
ONE HUNDRED
YEARS
AGO ?



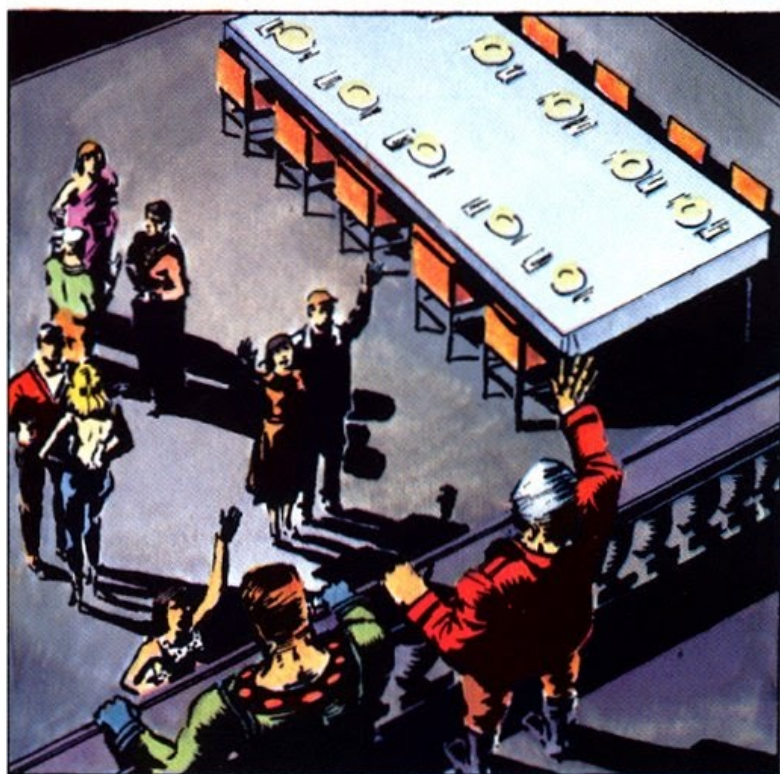
YES.

AND SO YOU
BUILT THE
TOYNBEE
CONVECTOR ?

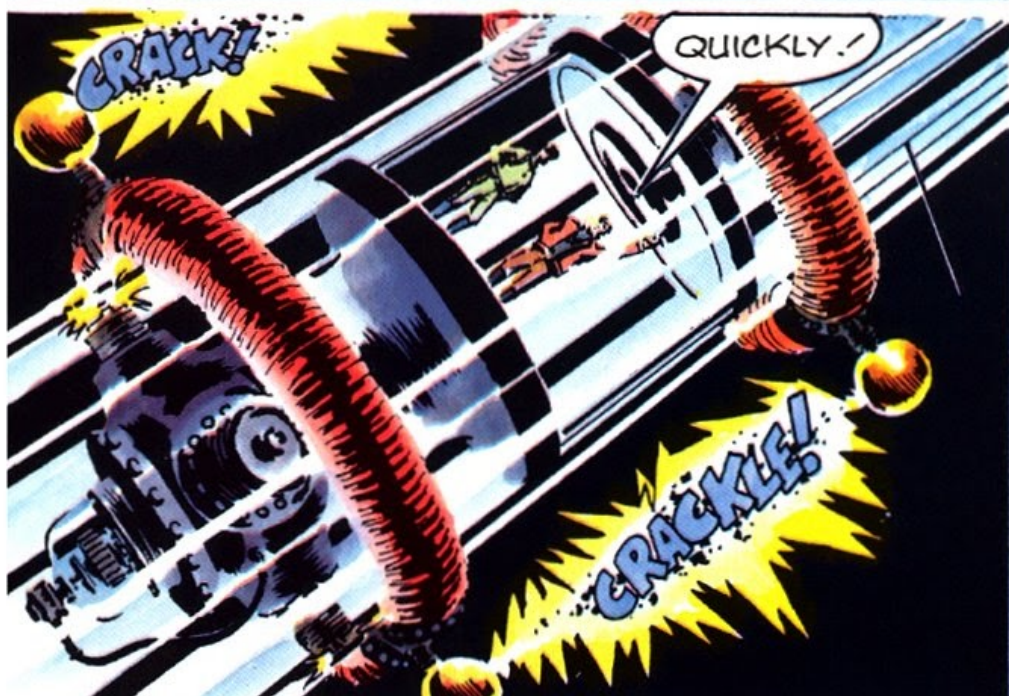
NOT ALL
AT ONCE.
IT TOOK YEARS
TO BROOD ON.



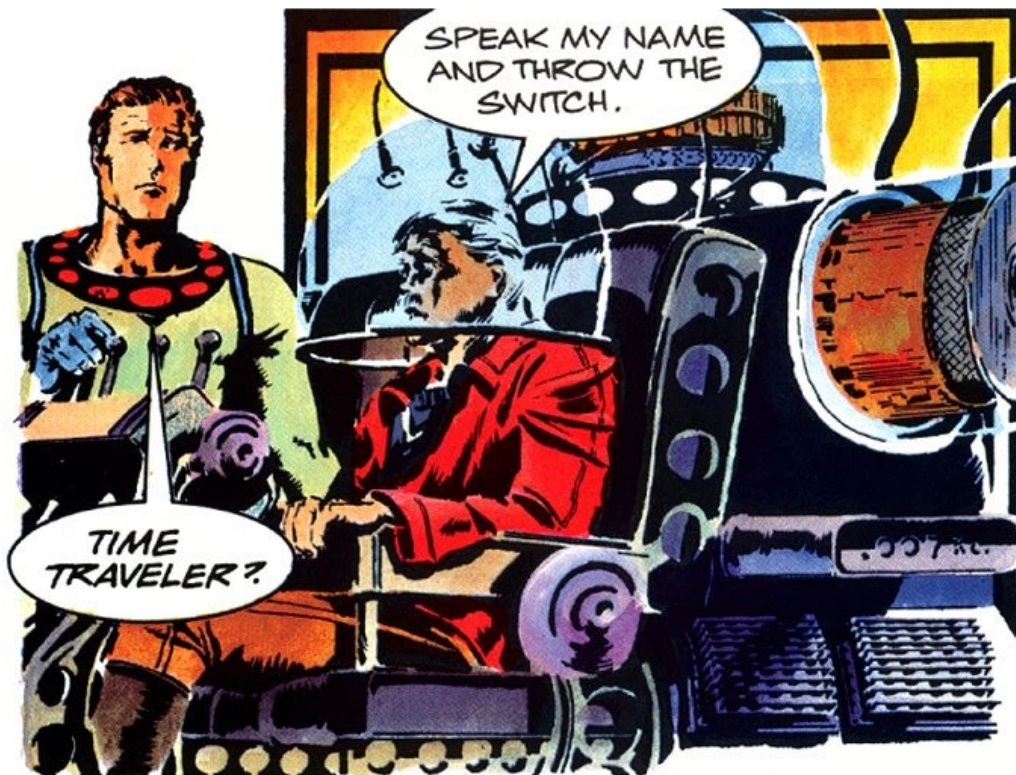
"AREN'T I SOMETHING? I MADE MACHINES, BUILT MINIATURE CITIES, TALKED TO DOLPHINS, FAKED TAPES. IT TOOK YEARS OF SWEATING WORK AND SECRET PREPARATION BEFORE I ANNOUNCED MY DEPARTURE, LEFT, AND CAME BACK WITH GOOD NEWS."



QUICKLY NOW. HERE ARE THREE MORE TAPES WITH FULLER DATA. HERE'S A HISTORY OF MY WHOLE INSPIRED FRAUD AND A FINAL MANUSCRIPT.



YOU SEE THE POINT, DON'T YOU, SON? WHAT SEEMS A LIE IS A RAMSHACKLE NEED WISHING TO BE BORN.

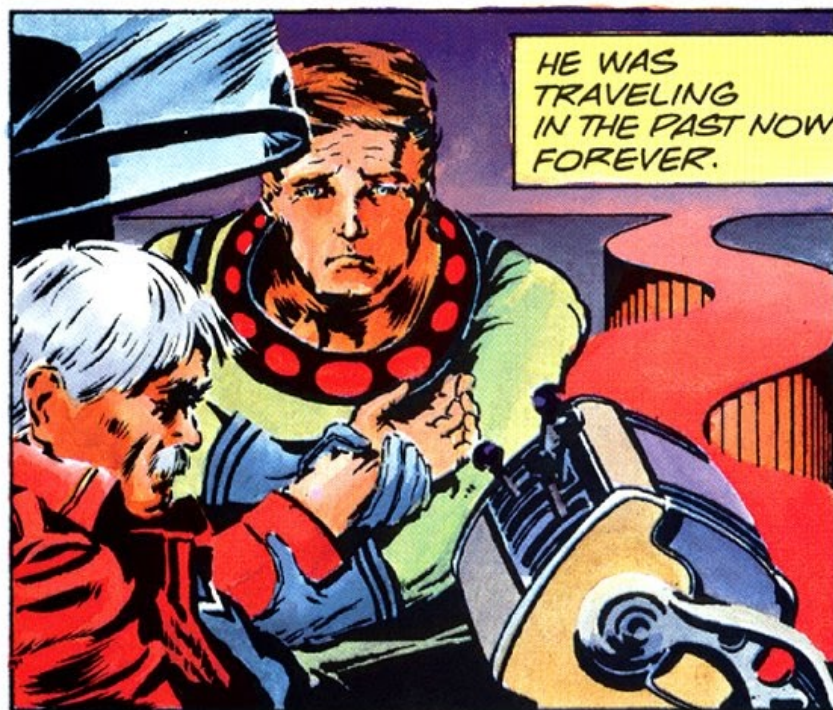


SPEAK MY NAME
AND THROW THE
SWITCH.

TIME
TRAVELER?



THE OLD MAN HAD
INDEED GONE
BACK IN TIME, AND
ITS NAME WAS
DEATH.

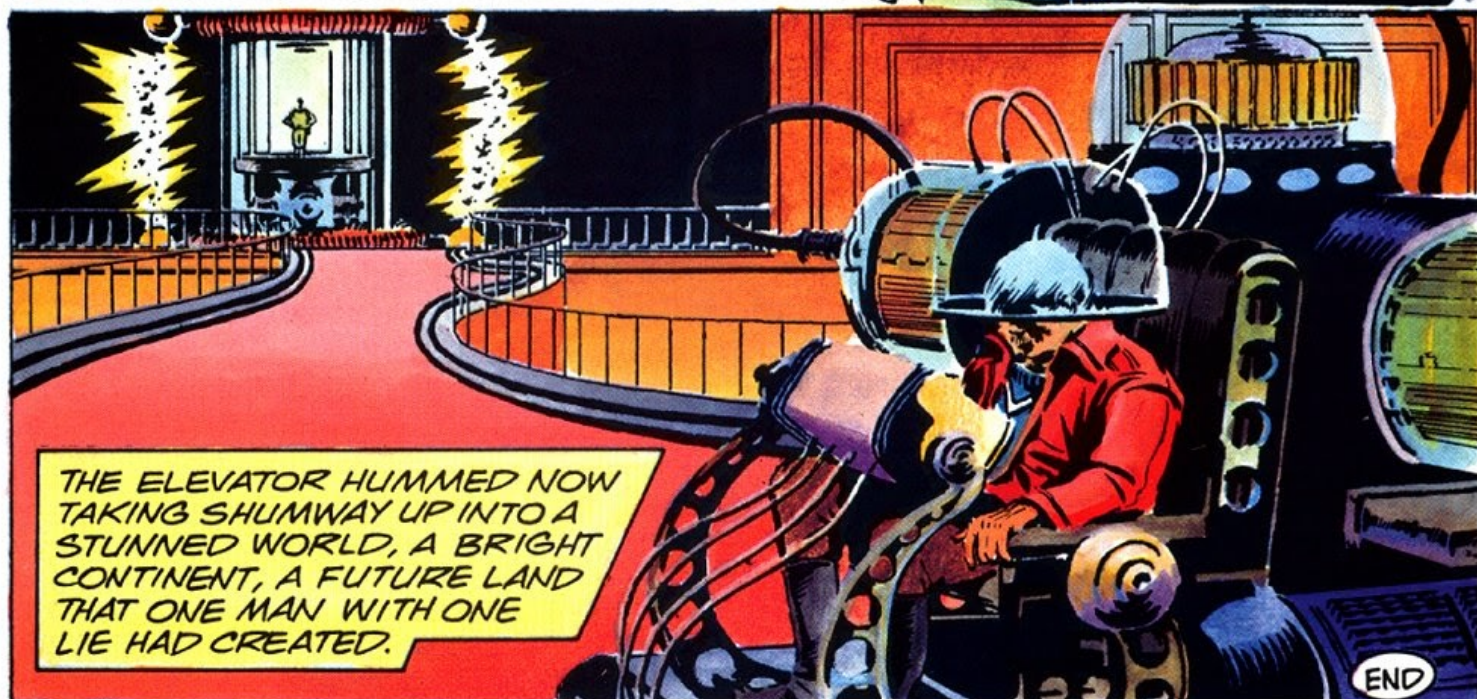


HE WAS
TRAVELING
IN THE PAST NOW,
FOREVER.



INCINERATOR

STANDBY



THE ELEVATOR HUMMED NOW
TAKING SHUMWAY UP INTO A
STUNNED WORLD, A BRIGHT
CONTINENT, A FUTURE LAND
THAT ONE MAN WITH ONE
LIE HAD CREATED.

END

THE DRAGON

Adapted by Vicente Segrelles

It is hard to talk about THE DRAGON without giving away its secret, telling you the surprise. So all I can talk about is the boy I was that became the young man who thought about, and the older man who wrote this story. I loved dinosaurs from the age of five when I saw the film THE LOST WORLD, filled with prehistoric monsters. I became even more enamored with these beasts, when at age 13, KING KONG fell off the Empire State and landed on me in the front row of the Elite Theater. I never recovered. Later, I met and became friends with Ray Harryhausen, who built and film-animated dinosaurs in his garage when we were both 18. We dedicated our lives to these monsters, to dragons in all their shapes and forms. Simultaneously, we loved airplanes, rocketships, trolley cars and trains. From this amalgam of loves came our lives and careers. We wound up doing THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS as our first film. Not very good, but a beginning. He went on to MIGHTY JOE YOUNG and I to MOBY DICK and its great sea-beast. When I was in my thirties I wrote THE DRAGON and combined two of these loves. You'll have to read the story to find out which ones. Read on.



THE DRAGON



WHAT A LAND
OF NIGHTMARES.
EVERYTHING
HAPPENS
HERE.

SHEEP PANIC
AND DIE INSANE.
WOMEN DELIVER
FORTH MONSTERS.
AT SUNRISE, THE
DRAGON'S VICTIMS
ARE STREWN
HITHER-THITHER
ON THE HILLS.

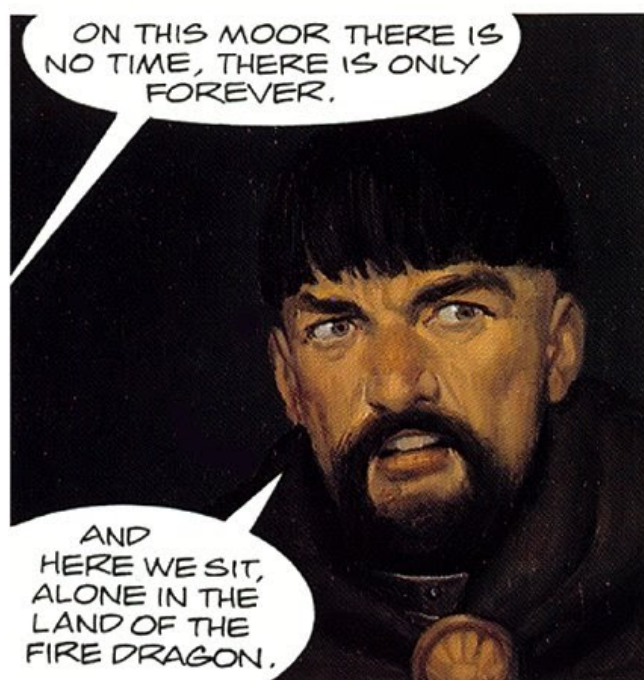
THIS
DRAGON - THEY
SAY HIS EYES ARE
FIRE. HIS BREATH
A WHITE GAS. YOU
CAN SEE HIM BURN
ACROSS THE DARK
LANDS.





HOW MANY KNIGHTS HAVE GONE
FOR THIS MONSTER AND
FAILED, EVEN AS WE SHALL
FAIL ?

ENOUGH
OF
THAT.!



ON THIS MOOR THERE IS
NO TIME, THERE IS ONLY
FOREVER.

AND
HERE WE SIT,
ALONE IN THE
LAND OF THE
FIRE DRAGON.



BE YOU AFRAID,
THEN GIRD ON
YOUR ARMOR.!

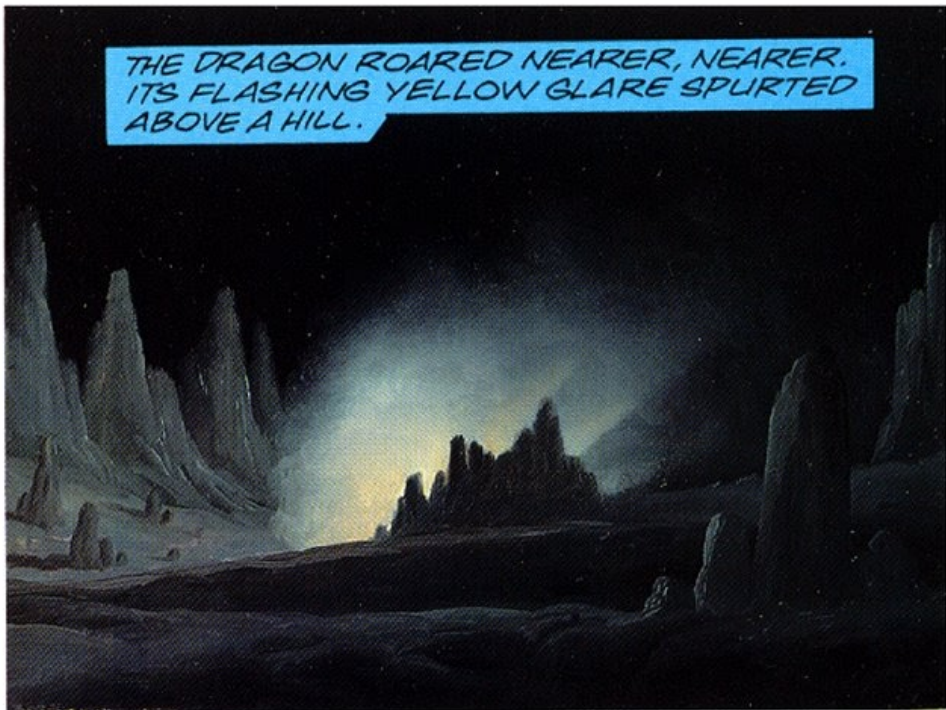


THE WIND WAS A THOUSAND SOULS DYING
AND ALL TIME CONFUSED AND IN TRANSIT.
IT WAS FOG INSIDE OF A MIST INSIDE OF
A DARKNESS.

THERE... OH,
LORD. IN THE
DISTANCE.



THE DRAGON ROARED NEARER, NEARER.
ITS FLASHING YELLOW GLARE SPURTED
ABOVE A HILL.



QUICK! THIS
IS WHERE IT
PASSES!

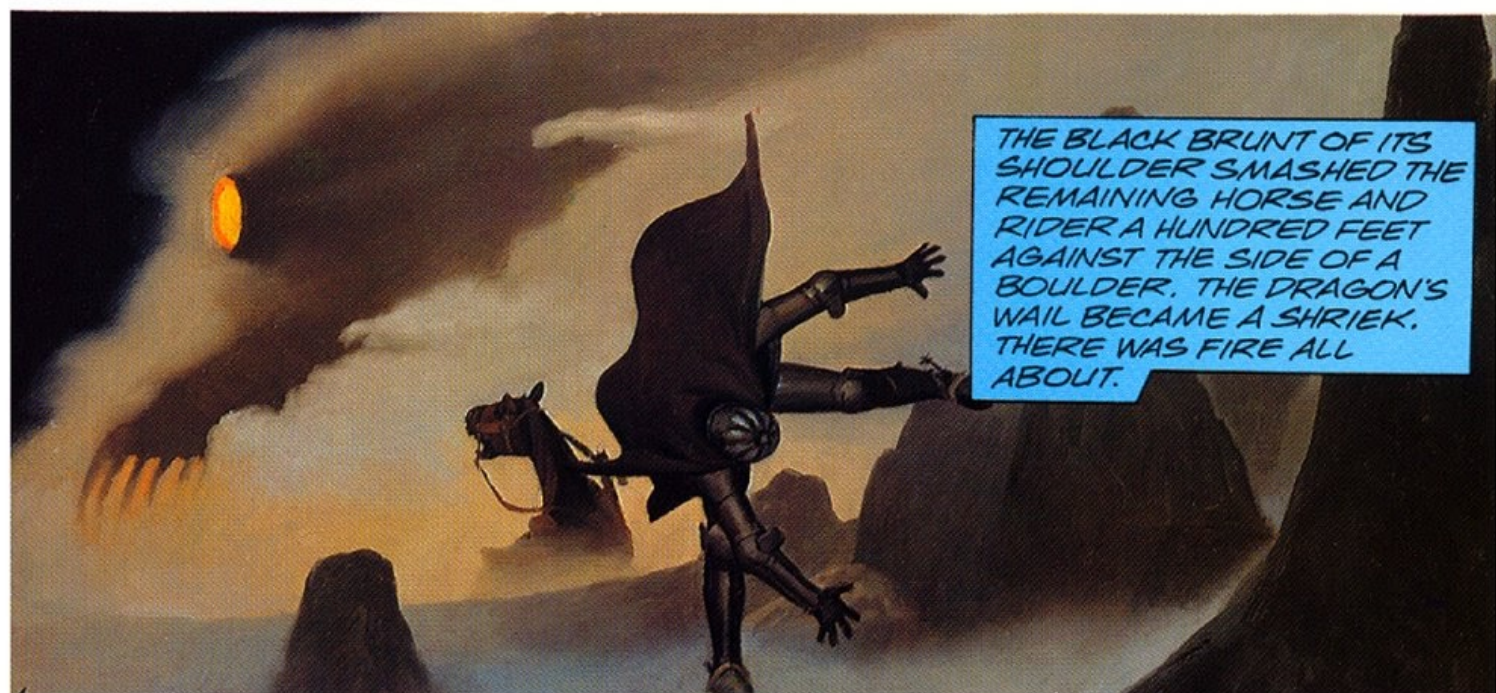


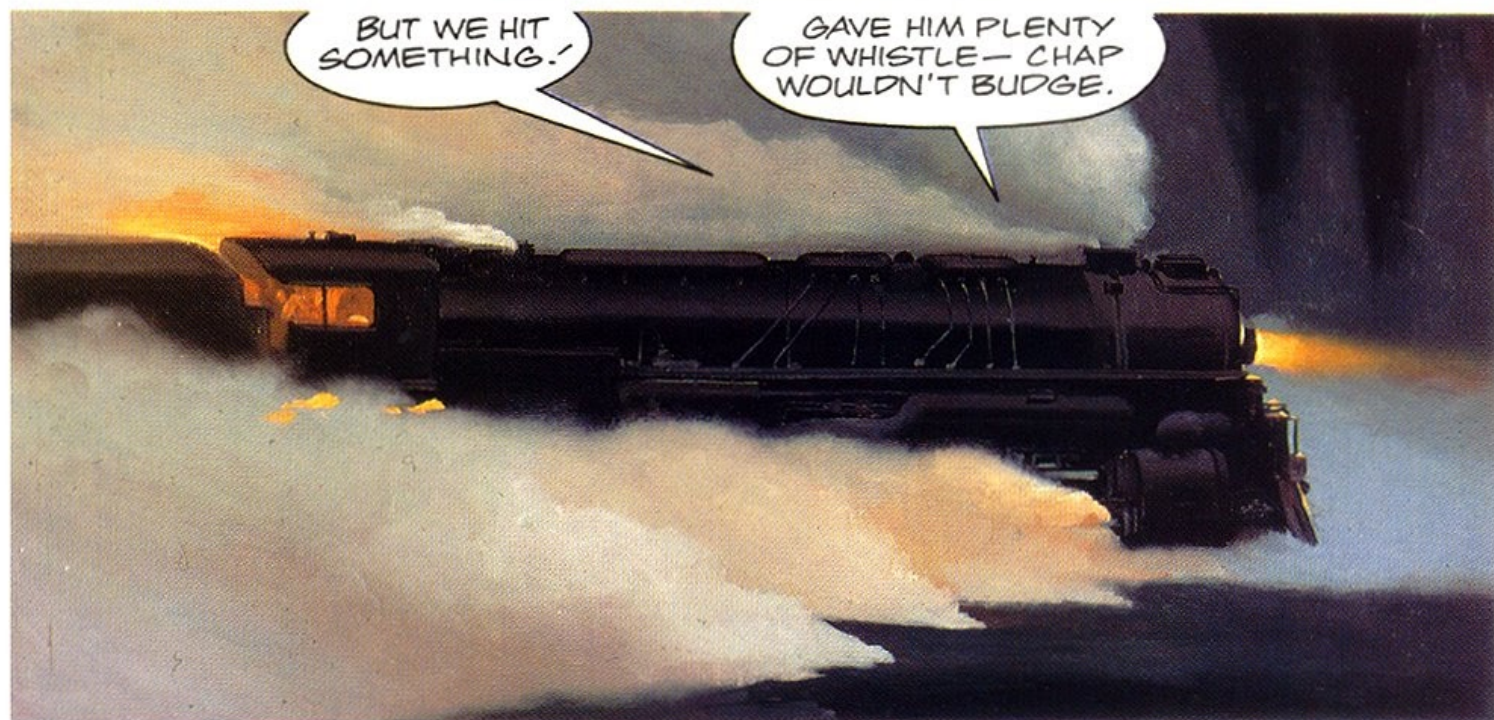
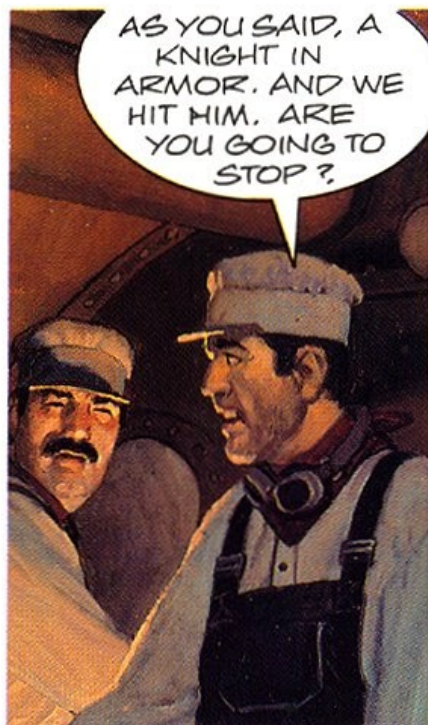
THEY SEIZED THEIR LANCES WITH
MAILED FISTS AND URGED THEIR
HORSES FORWARD.



THE DRAGON ROUNDED A HILL. WITH A
TERRIBLE WAILING CRY AND A
GRINDING RUSH IT FLUNG ITSELF
FORWARD.







A SPECIAL E.C. COMICS RAY BRADBURY CLASSIC

Illustrated By Al Williamson
Newly Colored By Michael Uman

This story, I, ROCKET, goes so far back in time it is hard to recall the exact circumstances that caused me to write it. I have written stories about deep wells on Mars in which souls live and breathe and remember. I have written stories about entire cities on far worlds that have some sort of intelligence and wait for visitors to arrive. I have written about the sea itself, and its, to me, female personality, owning those who swim out to test its tides. So perhaps it was only natural that in my early twenties I decided to let a rocket ship, a space craft, speak for itself. Not an easy thing to do, especially when you are as young as I was, with not enough writing experience to bring it off completely. Nevertheless, here it is, a rather naive tale but now fleshed out by an excellent illustrative artist, made much better than my original. If rockets, like computers, have secret minds, step up, look and listen to this spaceship. I was glad to encounter it as an older man rediscovering his younger self in a long lost tale.

RAY

I, ROCKET

AT THE RATE THINGS ARE COMING AND GOING, IT'LL TAKE A FEW HUNDRED YEARS TO BREAK ME DOWN INTO RUST AND CORROSION... MAYBE LONGER. IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL HAVE MANY DAYS AND NIGHTS TO THINK IT OVER. YOU CAN'T STOP ATOMS FROM REVOLVING AND HUMMING THEIR LIFE-ORBITS INSIDE METAL. THAT'S HOW METAL LIVES ITS OWN SPECIAL LIFE. THAT'S HOW METAL THINKS. WHERE I LIE IS A BARREN, PEBBLED PLATEAU, WITH PALE, WEEDY GROWTHS AND A FEW HUNCHED TREES COMING UP OUT OF PLANETOID ROCK. THERE'S A WIND COMES OVER THE PLATEAU EVERY MORNING. THERE'S RAIN COMES IN THE TWILIGHT, AND A SILENCE COMES DOWN EVEN CLOSER IN THE NIGHT. THAT'S MY WHOLE LIFE, NOW... LYING HERE WITH MY JETS TWISTED AND MY FORE-PLATES BASHED...

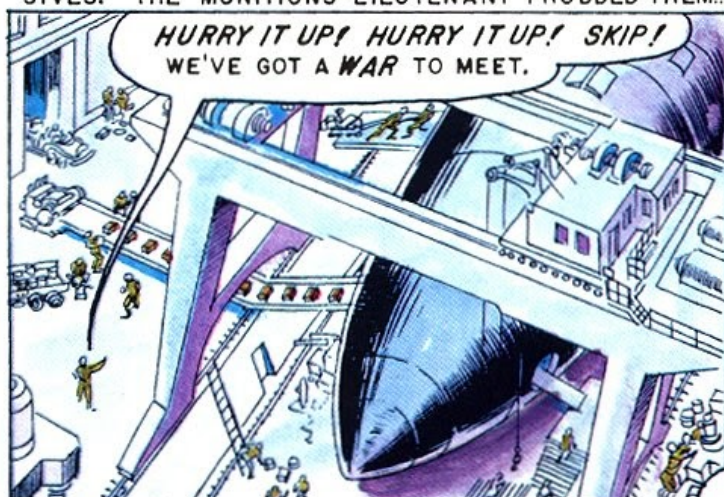
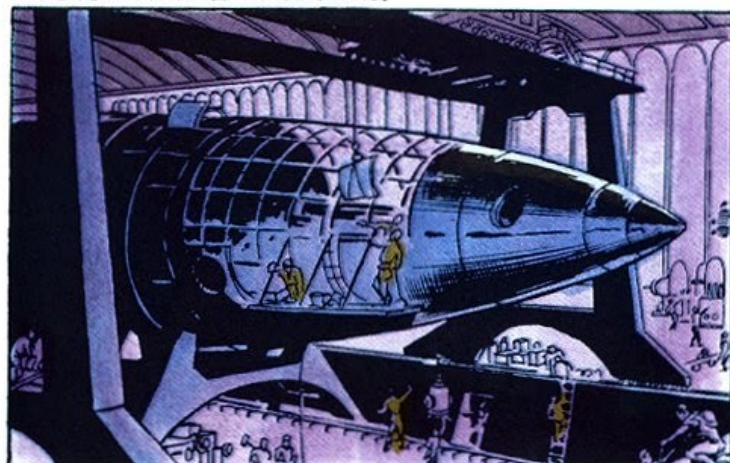


AL WILLAMSON

BUT WHILE I'M RUSTING AND WONDERING, I CAN THINK IT ALL OVER...
HOW I CAME TO BE HERE, HOW I CAME TO BE BUILT...

I WAS A WAR ROCKET. MY BIRTH-PERIOD, AND THE BASE WHERE I WAS INTEGRATED... SKELETON, SKIN, AND INNARDS... WENT THROUGH THE USUAL BIRTH-PAINS. IT IS A DIM PORTION IN MY MEMORY, BUT WHEN THE FINAL HULL WAS MELTED TO ME, THE AWARENESS WAS THERE. A **METAL** AWARENESS. I COULD THINK, BUT TELL NOBODY THAT I THOUGHT...

FORE AND AFT THEY PLACED THEIR SPACE-ARTILLERY NOZZLES, AND WEIGHTED ME WITH SCARLET AMMUNITION. I BEGAN TO FEEL MY PURPOSE, EXPECTANTLY, PERHAPS A BIT IMPATIENTLY. MEN HUSTLED IN AND OUT OF ME WITH SMALL RUBBER-TIRED TRUCKS BEARING EXPLOSIVES. THE MUNITIONS-LIEUTENANT PRODDED THEM...



THEN THERE WAS SOME FANCY BUSINESS ABOUT A CHRISTENING. SOME OFFICIAL'S DAUGHTER CRASHED A BOTTLE OF FOAMING LIQUOR ON MY PROW. A FEW REPORTERS FLICKED THEIR CAMERAS. AND A SMALL CROWD PUT UP THEIR HANDS, WAVED THEM, AND PUT THEM DOWN, AS IF THEY REALIZED HOW STUPID IT REALLY WAS WASTING THAT FINE CHAMPAGNE...



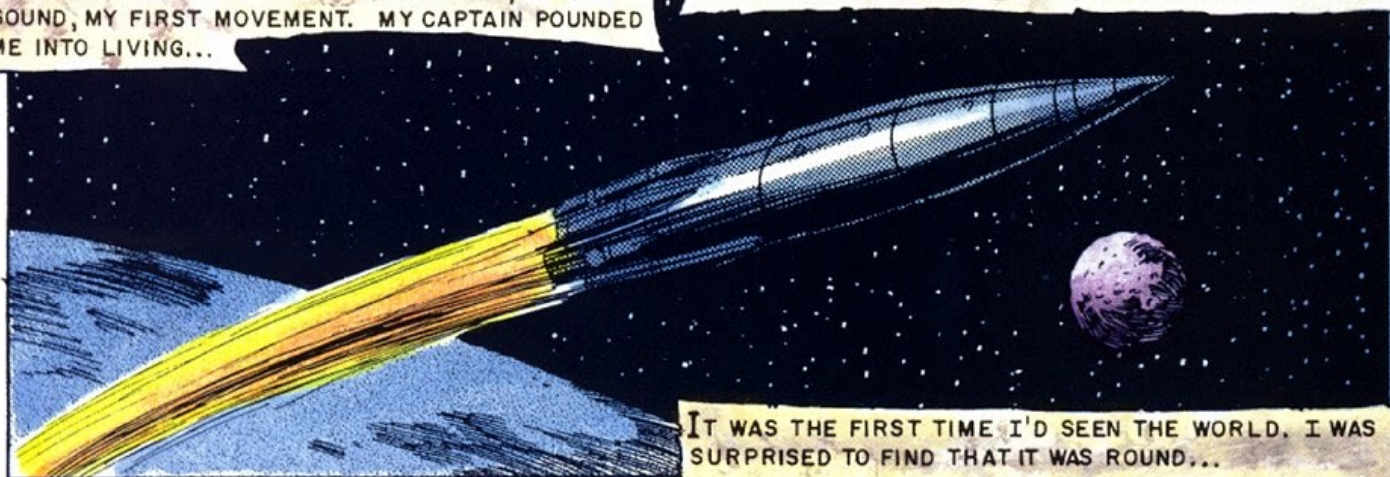
THEY RAPPED ME TIGHT. THEY EXPELLED THE CROWD. SIRENS SHOUTED ACROSS THE BASE APRON. THE CREW DID THINGS TO MY ALIMENTARY CANAL. THE CAPTAIN SHOUTED. THAT WAS THE SLAP ON MY BACK THAT BROUGHT ME MY FIRST BREATH, MY FIRST SOUND, MY FIRST MOVEMENT. MY CAPTAIN POUNDED ME INTO LIVING...

AND THEN I SAW THE CAPTAIN, METAL BLESS HIM, FOR THE FIRST TIME. HE CAME RUNNING ACROSS THE FIELD, THE MASTER OF MY FATE... THE CAPTAIN OF MY SOUL. I LIKED HIM RIGHT OFF. HE STOMPED ABOARD AND CRACKED OUT ORDERS...

Snap it! GET RID OF THAT *DAME*, AND THOSE *REPORTERS* OUT THERE. CLEAR THE *APRON*! SEAL THE *LOCKS*! CLAMP *PORTS*! WE'RE *PUSHING* THE BLAZES OUT OF HERE!



I THREW OUT WINGS OF FIRE AND SMOKE. SUDDENLY I WASN'T METAL LYING IN THE SUN ANY MORE. I WAS THE BIGGEST DARN BIRD THAT EVER SANG INTO THE SKY. MAYBE MY VOICE WASN'T ANYTHING BUT THUNDER, BUT IT WAS STILL SINGING TO ME. I SANG LOUD AND I SANG LONG...



IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'D SEEN THE WORLD. I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THAT IT WAS ROUND...

YES, I LIKED MY CAPTAIN. HIS NAME WAS *LAMB*... IRONIC FOR A MAN LACKING LAMB-LIKE QUALITIES. CAPTAIN LAMB SAT IN MY CONTROL ROOM, CRACKING HIS KNUCKLES...

YES. SHE'S A *GOOD* SHIP! A *FINE* SHIP. WE'LL *POUND THE HOLY MARROW* OUT OF THOSE *MARTIANS*.

THE YOUNG MAN NAMED CONRAD SAT BESIDE THE CAPTAIN AT THE DUO-CONTROLS...

WE'D BETTER. THERE'S A *GIRL* WAITING IN YORK PORT FOR US TO COME *BACK*.

US! BOTH OF YOU? YOU AND HILLARY?



THE *TWO* OF US. *BOTH* ON THE *SAME* WAR-ROCKET. AT LEAST I CAN KEEP MY *EYE* ON HIM. I'LL KNOW HE'S NOT DOWN *THERE* SCUDDING ALONG ON *MY* ACCELERATION...

SPACE IS A *FUNNY* PLACE TO TALK ABOUT *LOVE*. IT'S LIKE *LAUGHING OUT LOUD* IN A *BIG CATHEDRAL*... TRYING TO MAKE A *WALTZ* OUT OF A *HYMN*.



THEY WERE PART OF ME... LAMB AND CONRAD AND THE CREW, LIKE BLOOD CORPUSCLES PULSING IN THE ARTERIES OF A WARM BODY. AND LIKE ANY BODY, THERE WERE MICROBES TOO. DESTROYING ELEMENTS. THEIR NAMES WERE LARION AND BELLOC...

NOW AS FAR AS KILLING LAMB GOES... THAT'S OUT! SO DO I! THEN WE WE'RE ONLY TWO AGAINST HIT THE THE REST. I WANT TO COLLECT THAT MONEY WE'RE GUARANTEED... ENGINES, EH, LARION?

A WELL-PLACED TIME-BOMB SHOULD WORK MIRACLES WITH THE MAIN JET-ENGINE. AND WHEN IT HAPPENS, WE CAN BE OUT AND AWAY IN SPACE IN PLENTY OF TIME.

SEEMS A SHAME. NICE NEW ROCKET, NEVER TESTED BEFORE. AND IT ALL GOES BOOM BEFORE IT HAS PROVEN ITSELF...

DON'T GET SENTIMENTAL, BELLOC. YOU'RE GETTING PAID FOR IT. NOW HERE'S THE PLAN. THERE'S A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONFUSION DURING THE SHIFT CHANGE-OVER. HALF THE CREW'S GROGGY. THE OTHER HALF'S TOO TIRED TO WORRY. NOW, DURING THE NEXT CHANGE-OVER, WE'LL...



SELF-PRESERVATION IS AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING THING. YOU FIND IT IN METAL AS YOU FIND IT IN MEN. MY BODY WAS TO BE ATTACKED. FROM OUTSIDE I FEARED NOTHING. FROM INSIDE, I WAS UNCERTAIN. I DIDN'T APPROVE OF THE IDEA...

LARION. BELLOC. GOING BELOW? I'LL BE DOWN IN THIRTY MINUTES. WE'LL CHECK THE AUXILIARIES TOGETHER.

RIGHT, SIR. C'MON, BELLOC.



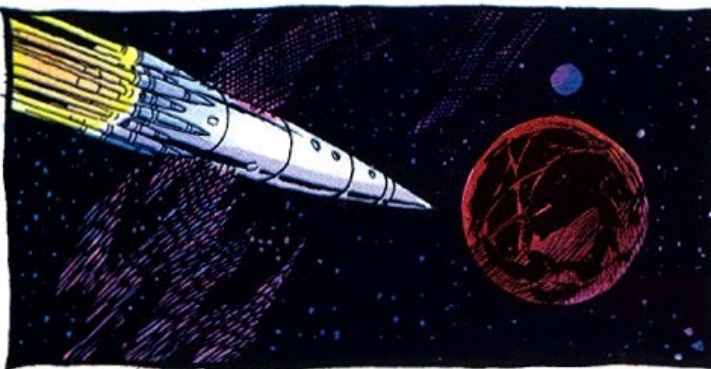
LARION AND BELLOC WENT BELOW TO THEIR STATIONS. THE CHANGE-OVER PROCEEDED. THE POISON WAS IN MY HEART... WAITING...

DID YOU CHECK THE LIFE-BOATS, BELLOC?

NUMBER THREE BOAT'S READY TO GO. LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH...



MARS CAME UP AHEAD LIKE A RUDDY DROP OF DRIED BLOOD. THE WAR I'D NEVER SEEN BUT ALWAYS HEARD ABOUT WAS OUT THERE. I WANTED TO BE PART OF IT. I WANTED TO GET THERE WITH LAMB AND HILLARY AND CONRAD AND THE OTHERS. LARION CLIMBING RUNGS, ON HIS WAY TO GET THE TIME-BOMB, BELLOC, WAITING BELOW. TIME GETTING SHORTER... SHORTER...



I THOUGHT ABOUT CAPTAIN LAMB AND THE WAY HE BARKED ORDERS, ABOUT HILLARY AND CONRAD THINKING ABOUT A WOMAN'S LIPS, ABOUT BELLOC, WAITING. AND SUDDENLY... THERE WAS A HISS, AN EXPLOSION...

WHAT IN...!

GOOD LORD!

WHAT WAS THAT?



SOMEBODY SCREAMED. I KNEW WHO IT WAS AND WHERE IT WAS AND WHAT IT WAS...

WARNING BELLS CLAMORED THROUGH ME. CONRAD SCUTTLED DOWN THE RUNGS, YELLING. HE VANISHED TOWARD THE ENGINE ROOM...

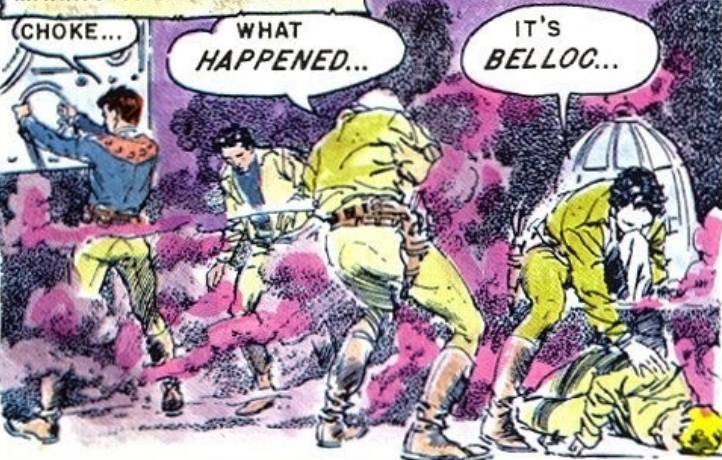
HILLARY GRABBED THE SHIP'S CONTROLS AND FROZE THEM, LISTENING AND WAITING. HE SAID ONE WORD...

THE CAPTAIN GOT THERE FIRST. HE TOOK ONE LOOK AND SCREAMED...

CUT THE FEED VALVE... FOR GOD'S SAKE!



CONRAD GRASPED A VALVE-WHEEL GLINTING ON THE WALL, TWISTING IT, GRUNTING. THE LOUD GUSHING NOISE STOPPED. STEAM-CLOUDS BILLOWED IN MY HEART, WRAPPING CAPTAIN LAMP AND THE OTHERS TIGHT... MAKING THEM COUGH...



MY VACUUM VENTILATORS BEGAN HUMMING, CLEARING THE STEAM. THEY SAW BELLOC, LYING THERE. HE SAID NOT A WORD TO ANYBODY. HE JUST BLEED WHERE THE EXPLODED OIL-PIPE HAD CAUGHT HIM ON THE NOSE AND CHEEK AND PLUNGED ON BACK INTO HIS BRAIN...



FOOTSTEPS ON THE RUNGS. LARION CAME DOWN. HE LOOKED AS IF SOMEBODY'D KICKED HIM IN THE STOMACH WHEN HE SAW BELLOC LYING THERE. HIS FACE SUCKED BONE-WHITE, STARING. HIS JAW DROPPED...

YOU... YOU KILLED HIM! YOU FOUND OUT... FOUND OUT WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO AND YOU KILLED HIM. WELL, I'LL SHOW YOU...



LARION BEGAN TO LAUGH. HE DARTED ABOUT SUDDENLY AND LEAPED UP THE LADDER RUNGS...



CONRAD RUSHED UP THE LADDER AT LARION'S HEELS. CAPTAIN LAMB WATCHED THEM GO, LISTENING TO THE FADING FEET ON THE RUNGS, GOING UP AND UP...

WATCH IT...

A FEW MINUTES LATER, CONRAD CAME BACK DOWN THE LADDER. HE HELD UP THE TIME-BOMB...

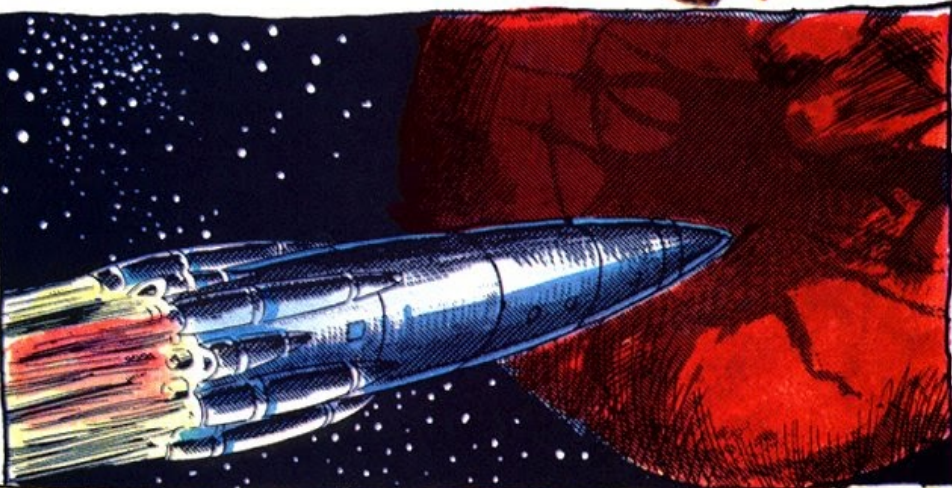
IT'S A GOOD THING THAT OIL-PIPE BURST, CAP. LARION TRIED TO HIDE THIS IN SUPPLY. IT'S A BOMB. HE AND BELLOC...

WHAT ABOUT LARION?

HE TRIED TO ESCAPE THROUGH AN EMERGENCY LIFE-BOAT AIR-LOCK. THE FOOL WAS IN TOO MUCH OF A HURRY. HE OPENED THE OUTER DOOR TOO SOON AND WAS SUCKED OUT INTO SPACE. HE'S GONE FOR GOOD...

THE CAPTAIN LOOKED PUZZLED...

THAT'S FUNNY. HE *KNEW* HOW THOSE AIR LOCKS WORK. HE *WOULDN'T* HAVE MADE SUCH A *STUPID* MISTAKE. IT...IT MUST HAVE BEEN AN *ACCIDENT*. ...OR... OR...*SOMETHING ELSE!*

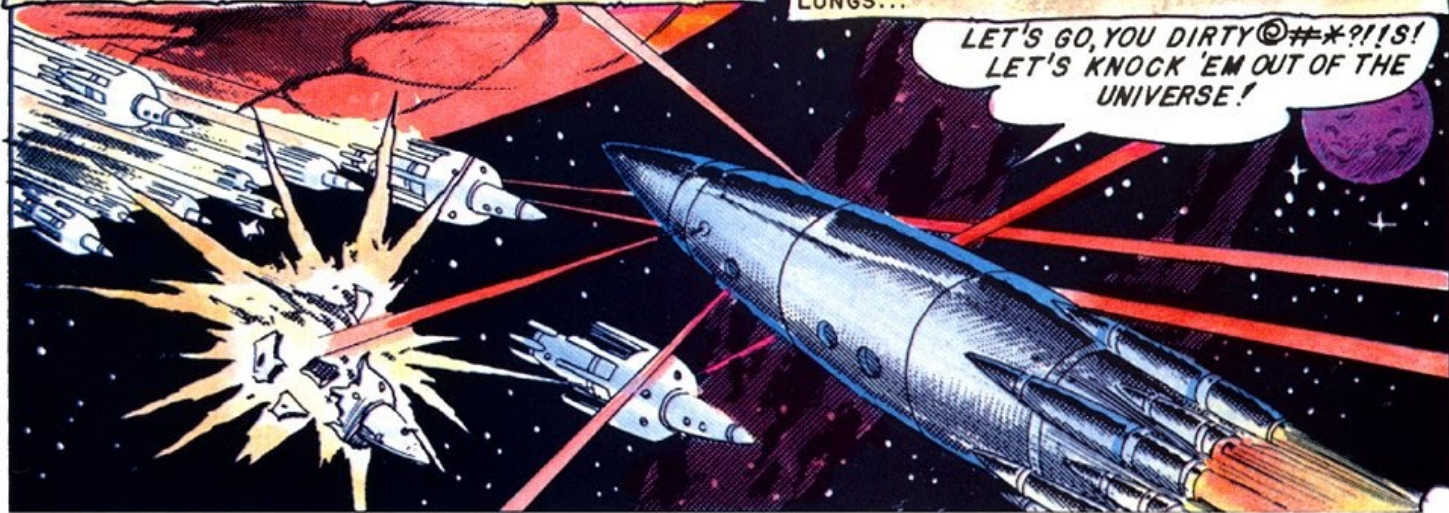


MY BODY WAS CLEANSED. THE ORGANIC POISON WAS ELIMINATED. MARS WAS VERY CLOSE NOW. RED. *BRIGHT* RED. IN ANOTHER SIX HOURS WE WOULD BE ENGAGED IN COMBAT...

I HAD MY TASTE OF WAR. WE DROVE DOWN, CAPTAIN LAMB AND THE MEN INSIDE ME, AND I PUT OUT MY ARMS FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND I CLOSED MY FINGERS OF POWER AROUND MARTIAN SHIPS...FIFTEEN OF THEM...

I SCREAMED. I TALKED TO THE STARS. I DIS-SECTED MARTIAN ROCKETS WITH QUICK CALM STROKES OF MY RAY-ARMS. AND SPUNKY LITTLE CAP LAMB GUIDED MY VITALS, SWEARING AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS...

LET'S GO, YOU DIRTY @##*?!S!
LET'S KNOCK 'EM OUT OF THE
UNIVERSE!



ONE DAY CONRAD COLLAPSED UPON THE CONTROL DECK WITH A SHARD OF SHRAPNEL WEBBED IN HIS LUNGS...



AND IT WAS HILLARY WHO TOOK THE NEWS BACK TO YORK PORT, TO THE GIRL THEY BOTH LOVED...

AND OTHERS OF THE CREW DIED WITHIN ME, THEIR BLOOD SPILLING OUT UPON MY DECK PLATES, WARM AND THICK. SLOP, THE COOK. AYRES, THE NAVIGATOR...



WE KNOCKED HOLES IN THE VACUUM. WE GOT WHAT WE WANTED OUT OF WAR, AND THEN... QUITE SUDDENLY ONE DAY... SPACE WAS SILENT. CAPTAIN LAMB SHRUGGED HIS SHOULDERS...

WELL, MEN, IT'S ALL OVER. THE WAR'S OVER... THIS SHIP IS BEING CONVERTED INTO A CARGO-FREIGHTER...



THE CREW MUTTERED, SHIFTING THEIR FEET... IT'S BEEN GOOD. I WON'T DENY IT. I HAD A FINE CREW AND A SWEET SHIP. WE WORKED HARD. WE DID WHAT WE HAD TO DO. AND NOW IT'S ALL OVER. WE HAVE *PEACE*.



PEACE. IT MEANS GETTING *DRUNK* AGAIN... LIVING ON *EARTH* AGAIN. IT MEANS FORGETTING HOW FREE-FALL FEELS ON YOUR GUTS. IT MEANS LOSING FRIENDS. AND IT MEANS LEAVING THIS ROCKET...

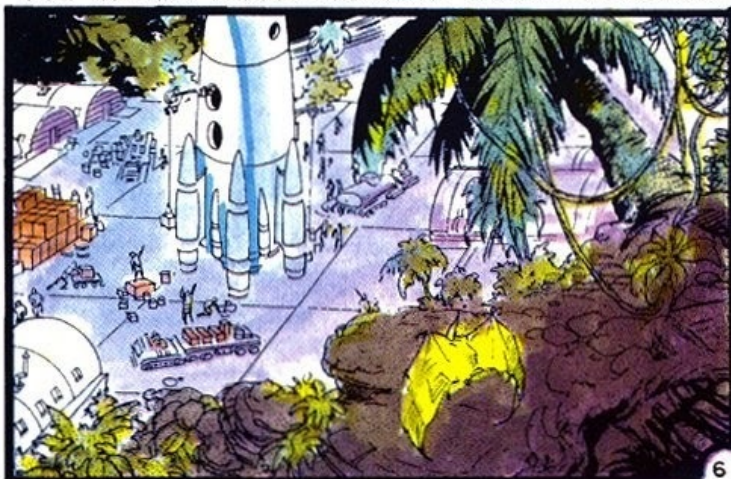


WE LANDED IN YORK PORT WITHOUT FANFARE. THE CREW PACKED THEIR DUFFLE BAGS AND LEFT. CAPTAIN LAMB LINGERED AWHILE, WALKING THROUGH ME, SWEARING UNDER HIS BREATH...



...AND AFTER A WHILE, HE LEFT TOO...

I WASN'T A WAR-ROCKET ANYMORE. THEY CRAMMED ME WITH CARGO AND SHIPPED ME BACK AND FORTH TO VENUS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. I HAD A NEW CAPTAIN AND A STRANGE CREW AND A STRANGE PEACEFUL ROUTINE COMING AND GOING ACROSS THE STARS...



NOTHING IMPORTANT HAPPENED UNTIL JULY 17TH, 2243. THAT WAS THE DAY I CRACKED UP ON THIS WILD, PEBBLED, LITTLE PLANETOID WHERE THE WIND WHINED AND THE RAIN POURED AND THE SILENCE WAS SO VERY SILENT...



A ROCKET THINKS IN ITSELF, BUT IT LIVES THROUGH ITS CREW AND ITS CAPTAIN. I'D BEEN LIVING ON BORROWED TIME SINCE CAPTAIN LAMB WENT AWAY AND NEVER CAME BACK. I LAY THERE THINKING ABOUT IT ALL... HELPLESS... LIKE A GIGANTIC METAL CHILD, AN IDIOT WHO NEEDS CONTROL... WHO NEEDS PULSING HUMAN, LIFE-BLOOD...



UNTIL ONE DAY, AFTER THE RAIN, I SAW A SILVER SPECK IN THE SKY... A SHIP. IT CAME DOWN A HUNDRED YARDS FROM MY SILENT HULK. A MAN CLIMBED OUT. HE CAME WALKING UP THE PEBBLED HILL. HE STOOD IN MY AIR-LOCK DOOR AND I HEARD HIM SAY...



...AND I KNEW WHO IT WAS...

CAPTAIN LAMB. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...

I HEARD YOU WERE LOST FOUR MONTHS AGO. I THOUGHT I'D HUNT YOU UP MYSELF. JUST FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE...



HE CLIMBED THE RUNGS TO MY CONTROL ROOM AND STOOD THERE, SWAYING, REMEMBERING ALL THE OLD TIMES WE HAD TOGETHER...

HILLARY! CONRAD! AYRES! SLOP! WHERE IN BLAZES IS EVERYBODY? WHERE IN GOD-BLAMED... CHOKE...



SILENCE. HE QUIT YELLING FOR PEOPLE WHO COULDN'T ANSWER HIM. HE SAT DOWN IN THE CONTROL CHAIR... TALKED TO ME...

THINGS ARE TURNING BAD ON VENUS. COLONIALS REVOLTING. YOU'RE OLD-FASHIONED, BUT YOU'RE PROUD AND TALL, AND A FIGHTER! YOU CAN FIGHT AGAIN! SO HELP ME GOD, I'LL BE CAPTAIN OF YOU AGAIN...



AND SO I'VE BEEN LYING HERE, WAITING FOR THE REPAIR CREW TO COME, WAITING WITH A STIRRING OF MY OLD ANTICIPATION. I'VE BEEN DEAD A WHILE, AND CAP LAMB HAS SHOWED UP TO SLAP ME BACK TO LIFE. THEY'LL GO OVER ME FROM SEAM TO SEAM... AND SOMEDAY SOON, CAP LAMB WILL STOMP INTO MY AIR LOCK AND SHOUT...



...AND I'LL BE LIVING AND BREATHING AND MOVING AGAIN... OFF TO WAR AGAIN! OFF TO WAR...

THE END



VOLUME TWO

Come Into my Cellar by Dave Gibbons
Rocket Summer & The Locusts by James Sherman
Night Meeting by Daniel Torres
Punishment Without Crime by Ralph Reese
A Piece Of Wood by Mark Chiarello
The Flying Machine by Bernard Krigstein

THE RAY BRADBURY CHRONICLES

THE AUTHORIZED ADAPTATIONS

A BYRON PREISS BOOK

TALES OF THE FUTURE, TIME TRAVEL, ALIENS, DRAGONS, DINOSAURS AND ROBOTS

IN UPCOMING VOLUMES FROM

WAYNE BARLOWE

RICHARD CORBEN

GARCES

STEVE LEIALOHA

MIKE MIGNOLA

SEAN PHILILPS

KEN STEACY

TIMOTHY TRUMAN

JOHN VAN FLEET

ANTHONY WILLIAMS

AL WILLIAMSON

LEBBEUS WOODS

WALLY WOOD

AND OTHERS

THE RAY BRADBURY CHRONICLES

THE AUTHORIZED ADAPTATIONS

FROM BYRON PREISS VISUAL PUBLICATIONS

John Van Fleet's credits include numerous works for "Hellraiser" as well as a book entitled "Primal," yet another creation of Clive Baker's, for Dark Horse Comics. Currently he is working with writer John Reiber on a four-part story entitled "Shadows Fall" for Touchmark Publishing due out next year.

Dave Gibbons has drawn and written for most major comics publishers on both sides of the Atlantic. His work has encompassed "Dr. Who," "Superman," the Hugo award-winning "Watchmen," and "Give Me Liberty."

Watercolorist Sam Parsons adds color to comics in his spare time. His published works include the award winning "Miracleman" and "Hawkworld."

Ralph Reese is a veteran illustrator and comics artist. He began as an assistant to the legendary Wally Wood. Later, he became a regular contributor to "National Lampoon", drawing the continuing strips "One Year Affair" and "Two Year Affair". In 1977 he illustrated one of the first graphic

novels, "The Son of Sherlock Holmes". More recently, Ralph was the illustrator of the continuing daily comic strip "Flash Gordon" for King Features.

Chuck Roblin was born in Hollywood, California in 1949. Roblin is the creator of "Tex Benson," a cold war aviation story taking place in the distant future, which ran as a syndicated daily and Sunday strip in European newspapers for over a decade. It was published as a comic book in the States in 3-D by The 3-D Zone and now is called "Zori Stories." Chuck is a huge Ray Bradbury fan and resides in Southern California.

P. Craig Russell, a twenty year comics veteran, is known for his adaptations of literary and musical works, including "The Magic Flute," "Salome," and Kipling's "Jungle Book Stories."

Vicente Segrelles is a Spanish artist who has been illustrating comics for over 20 years. He is best known for his famed "The Mercenary," published in 1980.

Michael Uman is a video director, designer and musi-

cian. In his spare time, he is working on a cure for the common cold.

Kent Williams' published works include the graphic novels "Blood: A Tale," and "Meltdown." A collection of his personal work, "Kent Williams: Drawings & Monotypes," was issued by Tundra Publishing in 1991. He is currently completing a new graphic novel: "Tell Me, Dark," in collaboration with writer Karl Edward Wagner, to be released in 1992.

Al Williamson is a veteran comic artist who is best known for his adaptations of "Star Wars", "The Empire Strikes Back", and "Flash Gordon". He is currently inking several characters for Marvel and lives in Pennsylvania.

Ray '3-D' Zone is the King of 3-D Comics. Over a 10 year period he has produced or published 100 3-D comics featuring such characters as "Batman", "Flash Gordon", "The Rocketeer", "Krazy Kat" and "Rat Fink". In addition to comic book scripting, he has written numerous articles about popular culture for a variety of publications.

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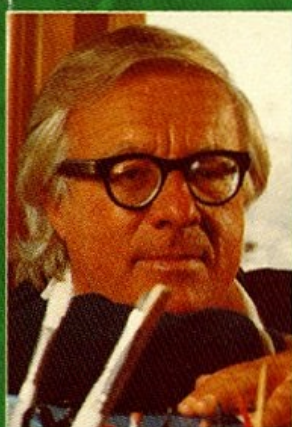
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